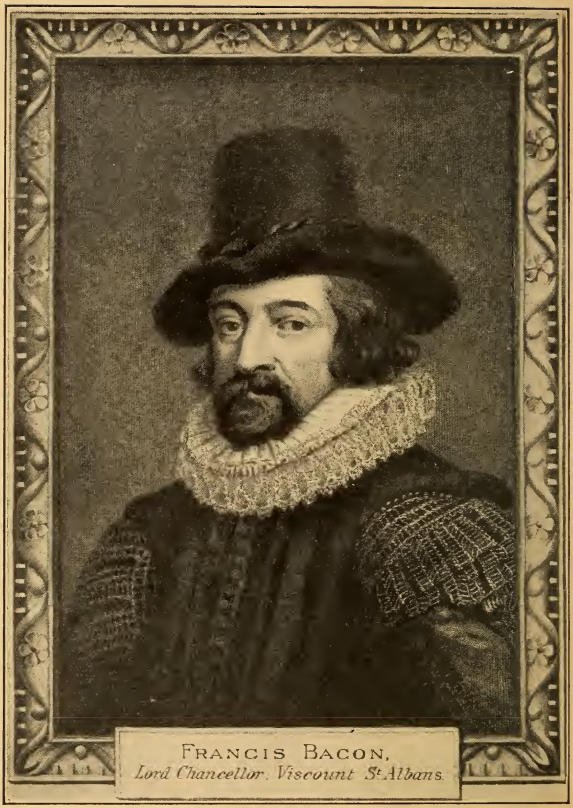

BEST
ENGLISH
PROSE

CHARACTERISTIC PASSAGES

FROM THE

HUNDRED BEST ENGLISH PROSE-WRITERS



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CHARACTERISTIC PASSAGES

FROM THE

Hundred Best English Prose-Writers

SELECTED BY

ADAM L. GOWANS, M.A.

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CONTENTS

PREFATORY NOTE

I HAVE never seen anything just like the little prose anthology which I now lay before lovers of good writing in general and teachers of English literature in particular. I believe that it supplies a long-felt want. Many handbooks contain no specimens whatever of the authors whose works and lives they describe, whereas the characteristics of their styles can be far more easily impressed upon the student's mind by the reading of actual passages from the writings cited, and by the teacher's remarks upon them, than by any amount of description. It is remarkable how plainly the prevailing qualities of an author reveal themselves in a very short passage, and the extracts given in the present volume are not too short to convey a clear idea of the styles of their writers.

Besides being characteristic, each passage is also interesting—either because of its descriptive or narrative merit, or from what it reveals of its author's character, or opinions, or times. The teacher will be able to point out, for instance, not only how the leading qualities of the style of the *Decline and Fall* appear in Gibbon's account of his early love-affair, but also how in these two pages he lays bare the worldliness of his nature.

Extracts such as those from Bunyan, Butler, or Fielding will enable him to inculcate ethical and religious principles in a very striking manner. Others will suggest useful lessons in history, biography, politics, or philosophy. A solecism may even be discovered occasionally, such as that in the extract from Kinglake (corrected in later editions), and may serve to point a moral.

In order that specimens of as many celebrated authors as possible who are principally known as prose-writers might be included, I found it necessary to adopt certain arbitrary rules of selection, I therefore omitted, in the first place, old dramatists who wrote mainly in blank verse, making exceptions in the case of Shakespeare and Jonson, and in the second place, I excluded all translations, giving a place to the "Morte d'Arthur" as being an original work, though founded on French legends.

Except in a few cases, where I preferred a later edition, the texts given are those which first appeared in print, but of course in modern spelling. Extracts from posthumous works, however, are dated with the year, or approximately so, in which they were composed; and letters always with the year in which they were written. I may add that the selection has again been confined to the works of deceased authors, and that the titles given to the extracts are mostly my own; also that I hope to follow up this volume with a second on similar lines.

A. L. G

SIR THOMAS MALORY

1. *Sir Dinadan the Humorous*

So Sir Tristram told La Beale Isoud of all his adventure as ye have heard tofore. And when she heard him tell of Sir Dinadan, Sir, she said, is not that he that made the song by king Mark? That same is he, said Sir Tristram, for he is the best joker and jester, and a noble knight of his hands, and the best fellow that I know, and all good knights love his fellowship. Alas, Sir, said she, why brought ye not him with you? Have ye no care, said Sir Tristram, for he rideth to seek me in this country, and therefore he will not away till he have met with me. And there Sir Tristram told La Beale Isoud how Sir Dinadan held against all lovers. Right so there came in a varlet and told Sir Tristram how there was come an errant knight into the town with such colors upon his shield. That is Sir Dinadan, said Sir Tristram. Wit ye what ye shall do?

said Sir Tristram; send ye for him, my lady Isoud, and I will not be seen, and ye shall hear the merriest knight that ever ye spake withal, and the maddest talker, and I pray you heartily that ye make him good cheer. Then anon La Beale Isoud sent into the town, and prayed Sir Dinadan that he would come into the castle and repose him there, with a lady. With a good will, said Sir Dinadan. And so he mounted upon his horse, and rode into the castle, and there he alight, and was unarmed, and brought into the castle. Anon La Beale Isoud came unto him, and either saluted other. Then she asked him of whence that he was. Madam, said Dinadan, I am of the court of king Arthur, and knight of the Table Round, and my name is Sir Dinadan. What do ye in this country? said La Beale Isoud. Madam, said he, I seek Sir Tristram the good knight, for it was told me that he was in this country. It may well be, said La Beale Isoud, but I am not aware of him. Madam, said Dinadan, I marvel of Sir Tristram and more other lovers, what aileth them to be so mad and so sotted upon women. Why, said La Beale Isoud, are ye a knight and be no lover? It is shame to

you: wherefore ye may not be called a good knight but if ye make a quarrel for a lady. Nay, said Sir Dinadan, for the joy of love is too short, and the sorrow thereof, and what cometh thereof, dureth over long. Ah, said La Beale Isoud, say ye not so, for here fast by was the good knight Sir Bleoberis, that fought with three knights at once for a damsel's sake, and he wan her afore the king of Northumberland. It was so, said Sir Dinadan, for I know him well for a good knight and a noble, and come of noble blood, for all be noble knights of whom he is come of, that is Sir Lancelot du Lake. Now I pray you, said La Beale Isoud, tell me will ye fight for my love with three knights that done me great wrong? and in so much as ye be a knight of king Arthur's I require you to do battle for me. Then Sir Dinadan said, I shall say you be as fair a lady as ever I saw any, and much fairer than is my lady queen Guenever, but, wit ye well at one word, I will not fight for you with three knights, Heaven defend me. Then Isoud laughed, and had good game at him.

Le Morte Darthur (1470), x., lvi

2. *Description of Jane Shore*

THIS woman was born in London, worshipfully friended, honestly brought up, and very well married, saving somewhat too soon, her husband an honest citizen, young and goodly and of good substance. Proper she was and fair; nothing in her body that you would have changed, but if you would have wished her somewhat higher. Thus say they that knew her in her youth. Albeit some that now see her (for yet she liveth) deem her never to have been well-visaged. Whose judgment seemeth me somewhat like as though men should guess the beauty of one long before departed, by her scalp taken out of the charnel-house; for now is she old, lean, withered, and dried up, nothing left but rivelled skin and hard bone. And yet being even such, whoso well advise her visage, might guess and devise which parts how filled would make it a fair face. Yet delighted not men so much in her beauty, as in her pleasant behaviour. For a proper wit had

she, and could both read well and write, merry in company, ready and quick of answer, neither mute nor full of babble, sometime taunting without displeasure and not without disport. In whom the king therefore took special pleasure. Whose favour, to say the truth (for sin it were to belie the devil), she never abused to any man's hurt, but to many a man's comfort and relief: where the king took displeasure she would mitigate and appease his mind: where men were out of favour, she would bring them in his grace. For many that had highly offended, she obtained pardon. Of great forfeitures she got men remission. And finally in many weighty suits, she stood many men in great stead, either for none, or very small rewards, and those rather gay than rich; either for that she was content with the deed self well done, or for that she delighted to be sued unto, and to show what she was able to do with the king, or for that wanton women and wealthy be not always covetous. I doubt not some shall think this woman too slight a thing to be written of and set among the remembrances of great matters; which they shall specially think, that haply shall esteem her only by that they now

see her. But meseemeth the chance so much the more worthy to be remembered, in how much she is now in the more beggarly condition, unfriended and worn out of acquaintance, after good substance, after as great favour with the prince, after as great suit and seeking to with all those that those days had business to speed, as many other men were in their times, which be now famous, only by the infamy of their ill deeds. Her doings were not much less, albeit they be much less remembered, because they were not so evil. For men use if they have an evil turn, to write it in marble: and whoso doth us a good turn, we write it in dust, which is not worst proved by her: for at this day she beggeth of many at this day living, that at this day had begged if she had not been.

The History of King Richard (*c.* 1513)

JOHN LYLY

3. *Remedies against Love*

Eschew idleness, my Philautus, so shalt thou easily unbend the bow and quench the brands of Cupid. Love gives place to labour; labour and

thou shalt never love. Cupid is a crafty child, following those at an inch that study pleasure, and flying those swiftly that take pains. Bend thy mind to the law, whereby thou mayest have understanding of old and ancient customs, defend thy clients, enrich thy coffers, and carry credit in thy country. If law seem loathsome unto thee, search the secrets of physic, whereby thou mayest know the hidden natures of herbs, whereby thou mayest gather profit to thy purse and pleasure to thy mind. What can be more exquisite in human affairs than for every fever be it never so hot, for every palsy be it never so cold, for every infection be it never so strange, to give a remedy? The old verse standeth as yet in his old virtue: that Galen giveth goods, Justinian honours. If thou be so nice that thou canst no way brook the practice of physic, or so unwise that thou wilt not beat thy brains about the institutes of the law, confer all thy study, all thy time, all thy treasure, to the attaining of the sacred and sincere knowledge of divinity. By this mayest thou bridle thine incontinency, rein thine affections, restrain thy lust. Here shalt thou behold as it were in a glass, that all the

glory of man is as the grass, that all things under heaven are but vain, that our life is but a shadow, a warfare, a pilgrimage, a vapour, a bubble, a blast; of such shortness, that David saith it is but a span long; of such sharpness, that Job noteth it replenished with all miseries; of such uncertainty, that we are no sooner born, but we are subject to death, the one foot no sooner on the ground, but the other ready to slip into the grave. Here shalt thou find ease for thy burden of sin, comfort for thy conscience pined with vanity, mercy for thine offences by the martyrdom of thy sweet Saviour. By this thou shalt be able to instruct those that be weak, to confute those that be obstinate, to confound those that be erroneous, to confirm the faithful, to comfort the desperate, to cut off the presumptuous, to save thine own soul by thy sure faith, and edify the hearts of many by thy sound doctrine. If this seem too strait a diet for thy straining disease, or too holy a profession for so hollow a person, then employ thyself to martial feats, to jousts, to tourneys, yea, to all torments, rather than to loiter in love.

Euphues. The Anatomy of Wit (1578)

4. *The Stag Hunt*

THEN would he tell them stories of such gallants as he had known: and so with pleasant company beguiled the time's haste, and shortened the way's length, till they came to the side of the wood, where the hounds were in couples staying their coming, but with a whining accent craving liberty, many of them in colour and marks so resembling, that it showed they were of one kind. The huntsmen, handsomely attired in their green liveries as though they were children of summer, with staves in their hands to beat the guiltless earth when the hounds were at a fault, and with horns about their necks to sound an alarm upon a silly fugitive: the hounds were straight uncoupled, and ere long the stag thought it better to trust to the nimbleness of his feet than to the slender fortification of his lodging: but even his feet betrayed him, for howsoever they went, they themselves uttered themselves to the scent of their enemies, who, one taking it of another, and sometimes believing the wind's ad-

vertisement, sometimes the view of their faithful counsellors the huntsmen, with open mouths then denounced war, when the war was already begun; their cry being composed of so well sorted mouths, that any man would perceive therein some kind of proportion, but the skilful woodmen did find a music. Then delight, and variety of opinion, drew the horsemen sundry ways, yet cheering their hounds with voice and horn, kept still, as it were, together. The wood seemed to conspire with them against his own citizens, dispersing their noise through all his quarters, and even the nymph Echo left to bewail the loss of Narcissus, and became a hunter. But the stag was in the end so hotly pursued that, leaving his flight, he was driven to make courage of despair, and so, turning his head, made the hounds, with change of speech, to testify that he was at bay, as if from hot pursuit of their enemy, they were suddenly come to a parley.

Arcadia (*c.* 1850), Bk. i

5. *Of Sudden Death*

Our good or evil estate after death dependeth most upon the quality of our lives. Yet somewhat there is why a virtuous mind should rather wish to depart this world with a kind of treatable dissolution, than to be suddenly cut off in a moment; rather to be taken than snatched away from the face of the earth.

Death is that which all men suffer, but not all men with one mind, neither all men in one manner. For being of necessity a thing common, it is through the manifold persuasions, dispositions, and occasions of men, with equal desert both of praise and dispraise, shunned by some, by others desired. So that absolutely we cannot discommend, we cannot absolutely approve, either willingness to live or forwardness to die.

And concerning the ways of death, albeit the choice thereof be only in his hands who alone hath power over all flesh, and unto whose appointment we ought with patience meekly to submit ourselves (for to be agents voluntarily in our

own destruction is against both God and nature); yet there is no doubt but in so great variety, our desires will and may lawfully prefer one kind before another. Is there any man of worth or virtue, although not instructed in the school of Christ, or ever taught what the soundness of religion meaneth, that had not rather end the days of this transitory life as Cyrus in Xenophon, or in Plato Socrates are described, than to sink down with them of whom Elihu hath said, *Momento moriuntur,* "there is scarce an instant between their flourishing and their not being?" But let us which know what it is to die as Absalom or Ananias and Sapphira died, let us beg of God that when the hour of our rest is come, the patterns of our dissolution may be Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David; who leisurely ending their lives in peace, prayed for the mercies of God to come upon their posterity; replenished the hearts of the nearest unto them with words of memorable consolation; strengthened men in the fear of God; gave them wholesome instructions of life, and confirmed them in true religion; in sum, taught the world no less virtuously how to die than they had done before how to live.

Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity (1597), Bk. v., Ch. xlvi

6. *Brutus at Cæsar's Funeral*

ROMANS, countrymen, and lovers! hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear: believe me for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe: censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses, that you may the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Cæsar's, to him I say that Brutus' love to Cæsar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Cæsar, this is my answer: not that I loved Cæsar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Cæsar were living, and die all slaves, than that Cæsar were dead, to live all freemen? As Cæsar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him; but as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love; joy for his fortune; honour for his valour; and death for his ambition. Who is here so base, that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude, that would not be a Roman? If

any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile, that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply. [*All.* None, Brutus, none.] Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Cæsar than you shall do to Brutus. The question of his death is enrolled in the Capitol; his glory not extenuated, wherein he was worthy, nor his offences enforced, for which he suffered death. [*Enter Antony and others, with Cæsar's body.*] Here comes his body, mourned by Mark Antony: who, though he had no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth; as which of you shall not? With this I depart,—that, as I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself, when it shall please my country to need my death.

Julius Cæsar (1601), Act iii., Sc. ii

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

7. *Death the Convincer*

For the rest, if we seek a reason of the succession and continuance of this boundless ambition

in mortal men, we may add to that which hath been already said, that the kings and princes of the world have always laid before them the actions, but not the ends, of those great ones which preceded them. They are always transported with the glory of the one, but they never mind the misery of the other, till they find the experience in themselves. They neglect the advice of God, while they enjoy life, or hope it; but they follow the counsel of Death upon his first approach. It is he that puts into man all the wisdom of the world, without speaking a word, which God, with all the words of his law, promises, or threats, doth not infuse. Death, which hateth and destroyeth man, is believed; God, which hath made him and loves him, is always deferred: "I have considered," saith Solomon, "all the works that are under the sun, and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit;" but who believes it, till Death tells it us? It was Death, which opening the conscience of Charles the Fifth, made him enjoin his son Philip to restore Navarre; and King Francis the First of France, to command that justice should be done upon the murderers of the protestants in Merindol and

Cabrieres, which till then he neglected. It is therefore Death alone that can suddenly make man to know himself. He tells the proud and insolent, that they are but abjects, and humbles them at the instant, makes them cry, complain and repent, yea, even to hate their forepast happiness. He takes the account of the rich, and proves him a beggar, a naked beggar, which hath interest in nothing but in the gravel that fills his mouth. He holds a glass before the eyes of the most beautiful, and makes them see therein their deformity and rottenness, and they acknowledge it.

O eloquent, just and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet!*

The History of the World (1614), Bk. v., Ch. vi., Sect. xii

SIR THOMAS OVERBURY

8. *A Fair and Happy Milkmaid*

Is a country wench, that is so far from making herself beautiful by art, that one look of hers is able to put all face-physic out of countenance. She knows a fair look is but a dumb orator to commend virtue, therefore minds it not. All her excellencies stand in her so silently, as if they had stolen upon her without her knowledge. The lining of her apparel (which is herself) is far better than outsides of tissue: for though she be not arrayed in the spoil of the silkworm, she is decked in innocence, a far better wearing. She doth not, with lying long abed, spoil both her complexion and conditions; nature hath taught her, too immoderate sleep is rust to the soul; she rises therefore with chanticleer, her dame's cock, and at night makes the lamb her curfew. In milking a cow, and straining the teats through her fingers, it seems that so sweet a milk-press makes the milk whiter or sweeter; for never came almond glove or aromatic ointment on her palm to taint it. The golden ears of

corn fall and kiss her feet when she reaps them, as if they wished to be bound and led prisoners by the same hand that felled them. Her breath is her own, which scents all the year long of June, like a new made haycock. She makes her hand hard with labour, and her heart soft with pity: and when winter evenings fall early (sitting at her merry wheel) she sings a defiance to the giddy wheel of fortune. She doth all things with so sweet a grace, it seems ignorance will not suffer her to do ill, being her mind is to do well. She bestows her year's wages at next fair; and in choosing her garments, counts no bravery in the world like decency. The garden and beehive are all her physic and surgery, and she lives the longer for it. She dares go alone, and unfold sheep in the night, and fears no manner of ill, because she means none: yet to say truth, she is never alone, for she is still accompanied with old songs, honest thoughts, and prayers, but short ones: yet they have their efficacy, in that they are not palled with ensuing idle cogitations. Lastly, her dreams are so chaste, that she dare tell them; only a Friday's dream is all her superstition; that she conceals for

fear of anger. Thus lives she, and all her care is she may die in the spring-time, to have store of flowers stuck upon her winding-sheet.

Characters (*c.* 1615)

ROBERT BURTON

9. *Concerning the Law*

Our forefathers, as a worthy chorographer of ours observes, had wont *pauculis cruculis aureis*, with a few golden crosses, and lines in verse, to make all conveyances, assurances. And such was the candour and integrity of succeeding ages, that a deed (as I have oft seen), to convey a whole manor, was *implicite* contained in some twenty lines or thereabouts: but now many skins of parchment will scarce serve turn; he that buys and sells a house, must have a house full of writings, there be so many circumstances, so many words, such tautological repetitions of all particulars (to avoid cavillation, they say), but we find, by our woful experience, that to subtle wits it is a cause of much more contention and variance, and scarce any conveyance so accurately

penned by one, which another will not find a crack in, or cavil at; if any one word be misplaced, any little error, all is disannulled. That which is law to-day is none to-morrow, that which is sound in one man's opinion, is most faulty to another; that, in conclusion, here is nothing amongst us but contention and confusion, new stirs every day, mistakes, errors, cavils, and at this present, as I have heard, in some one court, I know not how many thousand causes; no person free, no title almost good, with such bitterness in following, so many slights, procrastinations, delays, forgery, such cost, violence and malice, I know not by whose fault, lawyers, clients, laws, both or all: but as Paul reprehended the Corinthians long since, I may more appositely infer now: "There is a fault amongst you, and I speak it to your shame; is there not a wise man amongst you, to judge between his brethren; but that a brother goes to law with a brother?"

The Anatomy of Melancholy (1st Edit., 1621)

LORD BACON

10. *Of Studies*

STUDIES serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humour of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read

not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books may also be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit: and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend.

Abeunt studia in mores.

Essays or Counsels, Civil and Moral (3rd Edit., 1625), 1

II. *Memoria*

MEMORY, of all the powers of the mind, is the most delicate, and frail: it is the first of our faculties that age invades. Seneca, the father, the rhetorician, confesseth of himself, he had a miraculous one; not only to receive, but to hold. I myself could, in my youth, have repeated all that ever I had made, and so continued till I was past forty: since, it is much decayed in me. Yet I can repeat whole books that I have read, and poems of some selected friends, which I have liked to charge my memory with. It was wont to be faithful to me, but shaken with age now, and sloth, which weakens the strongest abilities, it may perform somewhat, but cannot promise much. By exercise it is to be made better, and serviceable. Whatsoever I pawned with it while I was young and a boy, it offers me readily, and without stops: but what I trust to it now, or have done of later years, it lays up more negligently, and oftentimes loses; so that I receive mine own (though frequently called for)

as if it were new and borrowed. Nor do I always find presently from it what I do seek; but while I am doing another thing, that I laboured for will come: and what I sought with trouble, will offer itself when I am quiet. Now in some men I have found it as happy as nature, who, whatsoever they read or pen, they can say without book presently; as if they did then write in their mind. And it is more a wonder in such as have a swift style, for their memories are commonly slowest; such as torture their writings, and go into council for every word, must needs fix somewhat, and make it their own at last, though but through their own vexation.

Timber of Discoveries (1641), lxii

SIR THOMAS BROWNE

12. *The Nobility of Man*

Now for my life, it is a miracle of thirty years, which to relate, were not a history, but a piece of poetry, and would sound to common ears like a fable. For the world, I count it not an inn, but an hospital; and a place not to live, but to die in. The world that I regard is myself; it is the micro-

cosm of mine own frame that I cast mine eye on: for the other, I use it but like my globe, and turn it round sometimes for my recreation. Men that look upon my outside, perusing only my condition and fortunes, do err in my altitude; for I am above Atlas's shoulders. The earth is a point not only in respect of the heavens above us, but of that heavenly and celestial part within us. That mass of flesh that circumscribes me limits not my mind. That surface that tells the heavens it hath an end cannot persuade me I have any. I take my circle to be above three hundred and sixty. Though the number of the ark do measure my body, it comprehendeth not my mind. Whilst I study to find how I am a microcosm, or little world, I find myself something more than the great. There is surely a piece of divinity in us; something that was before the elements, and owes no homage unto the sun. Nature tells me, I am the image of God, as well as Scripture. He that understands not thus much hath not his introduction or first lesson, and is yet to begin the alphabet of man.

Religio Medici (1643)

13. *"An Host's Daughter"*

In this journey I remember I went over Mount Gabelet by night, being carried down that precipice in a chair, a guide that went before bringing a bottle of straw with him, and kindling pieces of it from time to time, that we might see our way. Being at the bottom of a hill, I got on horseback and rid to Bourgoin, resolving to rest there awhile; and the rather, to speak truly, that I had heard divers say, and particularly Sir John Finet and Sir Richard Newport, that the host's daughter there was the handsomest woman that ever they saw in their lives. Coming to the inn, the Count Scarnafissi wished me to rest two or three hours, and he would go before to Lyons to prepare business for my journey to Languedoc. The host's daughter being not within, I told her father and mother that I desired only to see their daughter, as having heard her spoken of in England with so much advantage, that divers told me they thought her the handsomest creature that ever they saw.

They answered she was gone to a marriage, and should be presently sent for, wishing me in the meanwhile to take some rest upon a bed, for they saw I needed it. Waking now about two hours afterwards, I found her sitting by me, attending when I would open mine eyes. I shall touch a little of her description: her hair being of a shining black, was naturally curled in that order that a curious woman would have dressed it, for one curl rising by degrees above another, and every bout tied with a small ribbon of a nacarine, or the colour that the Knights of the Bath wear, gave a very graceful mixture, while it was bound up in this manner from the point of her shoulder to the crown of her head; her eyes, which were round and black, seemed to be models of her whole beauty, and in some sort of her air, while a kind of light or flame came from them not unlike that which the ribbon which tied up her hair exhibited; I do not remember ever to have seen a prettier mouth, or whiter teeth; briefly, all her outward parts seemed to become each other, neither was there anything that could be misliked, unless one should say her complexion was too brown,

which yet from the shadow was heightened with a good blood in her cheeks. Her gown was a green Turkey grogram, cut all into panes or slashes, from the shoulder and sleeves unto the foot, and tied up at the distance of about a hand's-breadth everywhere with the same ribbon with which her hair was bound; so that her attire seemed as bizarre as her person. I am too long in describing an host's daughter; howbeit I thought I might better speak of her than of divers other beauties, held to be the best and fairest of the time, whom I have often seen. In conclusion, after about an hour's stay, I departed thence, without offering so much as the least incivility; and indeed, after so much weariness, it was enough that her sight alone did somewhat refresh me.

The Life of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury (*c.* 1643)

JOHN MILTON

14. *Of Grandmotherly Legislation*

If we think to regulate printing, thereby to rectify manners, we must regulate all recreations and pastimes, all that is delightful to man. No

music must be heard, no songs be set or sung, but what is grave and Doric. There must be licensing dancers, that no gesture, motion, or deportment be taught our youth but what by their allowance shall be thought honest; for such Plato was provided of. It will ask more than the work of twenty licenses to examine all the lutes, the violins, and the guitars in every house; they must not be suffered to prattle as they do, but must be licensed what they may say. And who shall silence all the airs and madrigals, that whisper softness in chambers? The windows also, and the balconies, must be thought on: there are shrewd books, with dangerous frontispieces set to sale; who shall prohibit them, shall twenty licensers? The villages also must have their visitors to enquire what lectures the bagpipe and the rebeck reads even to the balladry, and the gamut of every municipal fiddler, for these are the countryman's Arcadias and his Montemayors. Next, what more national corruption, for which England hears ill abroad, than household gluttony? Who shall be the rectors of our daily rioting? and what shall be done to inhibit the multitudes that frequent those

houses where drunkenness is sold and harboured? Our garments also should be referred to licensing of some more sober work-masters to see them cut into a less wanton garb. Who shall regulate all the mixed conversation of our youth, male and female together, as is the fashion of this country; who shall still appoint what shall be discoursed, what presumed, and no further? Lastly, who shall forbid and separate all idle resort, all evil company? These things will be, and must be; but how they shall be less hurtful, how less enticing, herein consists the grave and governing wisdom of a state. To sequester out of the world into Atlantic and Utopian polities, which never can be drawn into use, will not mend our condition; but to ordain wisely as in this world of evil, in the midst whereof God hath placed us unavoidably.

Areopagitica (1644)

RICHARD BAXTER

15. *Of the Resurrection of the Dead*

The second stream that leadeth to paradise, is that great work of Jesus Christ, in raising our

bodies from the dust, uniting them again unto the soul. A wonderful effect of infinite power and love. Yea, wonderful indeed, saith unbelief, if it be thus. What, saith the atheist and sadducee, shall all these scattered bones and dust become a man? A man drowned in the sea is eaten by fishes, and they by men again, and these men by worms; what is become of the body of that first man; shall it rise again? Thou fool (for so Paul calls thee), dost thou dispute against the power of the Almighty: wilt thou pose him with this sophistry: dost thou object difficulties to the infinite strength? Thou blind mole; thou silly worm; thou little piece of creeping, breathing clay; thou dust; thou nothing: knowest thou who it is, whose power thou dost question? If thou shouldst see him, thou wouldst presently die. If he should come and dispute his cause with thee, couldst thou bear it: or if thou shouldst hear his voice, couldst thou endure? But come thy way, let me take thee by the hand, and do thou a little follow me; and let me, with reverence, as Elihu, plead for God; and for that power whereby I hope to arise. Seest thou this great, massy body of the

earth: what beareth it, and upon what foundation doth it stand? Seest thou this vast ocean of waters: what limits them, and why do they not overflow and drown the earth: whence is that constant ebbing and flowing of her tides: wilt thou say from the moon, or other planets: and whence have they that power of effective influence; must thou not come to a cause of causes, that can do all things? And doth not reason require thee, to conceive of that cause as a perfect intelligence, and voluntary agent, and not such a blind worker and empty notion as that nothing is, which thou callest nature? Look upward; seest thou that glorious body of light, the sun: how many times bigger it is than all the earth; and yet how many thousand miles doth it run in one minute of an hour, and that without weariness, or failing a moment? What thinkest thou; is not that power able to effect thy resurrection, which doth all this: dost thou not see as great works as a resurrection every day before thine eyes, but that the commonness makes thee not admire them?

The Saint's Everlasting Rest (1650), Pt. i., Ch. v., Sect. ii

THOMAS HOBBES

16. *Grounds of Belief*

From whence we may infer that, when we believe any saying whatsoever it be to be true, from arguments taken not from the thing itself, or from the principles of natural reason, but from the authority and good opinion we have of him that hath said it, then is the speaker, or person we believe in or trust in, and whose word we take, the object of our faith, and the honour done in believing is done to him only. And consequently when we believe that the Scriptures are the word of God, having no immediate revelation from God Himself, our belief, faith, and trust, is in the Church, whose word we take and acquiesce therein. And they that believe that which a prophet relates unto them in the name of God take the word of the prophet, do honour to him, and in him trust and believe, touching the truth of what he relateth, whether he be a true or a false prophet. And so it is also with all other history. For if I should not believe all that is written by historians of the

glorious acts of Alexander or Cæsar, I do not think the ghost of Alexander or Cæsar had any just cause to be offended, or anybody else but the historian. If Livy say the gods made once a cow speak, and we believe it not, we distrust not God therein, but Livy. So that it is evident, that whatsoever we believe, upon no other reason than what is drawn from authority of men only, and their writings, whether they be sent from God or not, is faith in men only.

Leviathan (1651), Pt. i., Ch. vii

JEREMY TAYLOR

17. *Of the Married State*

HERE is the proper scene of piety and patience, of the duty of parents and the charity of relatives; here kindness is spread abroad, and love is united and made firm as a centre: marriage is the nursery of heaven; the virgin sends prayers to God, but she carries but one soul to Him; but the state of marriage fills up the numbers of the elect, and hath in it the labour of love, and the delicacies of friendship, the blessing of society, and the union of hands and hearts; it hath in it

less of beauty, but more of safety, than the single life; it hath more care, but less danger; it is more merry, and more sad; is fuller of sorrows, and fuller of joys; it lies under more burdens, but it is supported by all the strengths of love and charity, and those burdens are delightful. Marriage is the mother of the world, and preserves kingdoms, and fills cities, and churches, and heaven itself. Celibate, like the fly in the heart of an apple, dwells in a perpetual sweetness, but sits alone, and is confined and dies in singularity; but marriage, like the useful bee, builds a house and gathers sweetness from every flower, and labours and unites into societies and republics, and sends out colonies, and feeds the world with delicacies, and obeys their king, and keeps order, and exercises many virtues, and promotes the interest of mankind, and is that state of good things to which God hath designed the present constitution of the world.

The Marriage Ring (1651), Pt. i

ABRAHAM COWLEY

18. *The Career of Oliver Cromwell*

WHAT can be more extraordinary, than that a person of mean birth, no fortune, no eminent qualities of body, which have sometimes, or of mind, which have often, raised men to the highest dignities, should have the courage to attempt, and the happiness to succeed in, so improbable a design, as the destruction of one of the most ancient, and in all appearance most solidly founded monarchies upon earth? That he should have the power or boldness to put his prince and master to an open and infamous death? To banish that numerous and strongly-allied family? To do all this under the name and wages of a parliament? To trample upon them too as he pleased, and spurn them out of doors when he grew weary of them? To raise up a new and unheard-of monster out of their ashes? To stifle that in the very infancy, and set up himself above all things that ever were called sovereign in England? To oppress all his enemies by arms, and all his friends afterwards by

artifice? To serve all parties patiently for a while, and to command them victoriously at last? To overrun each corner of the three nations, and overcome with equal facility, both the riches of the south, and the poverty of the north? To be feared and courted by all foreign princes, and adopted a brother to the gods of the earth? To call together parliaments with a word of his pen, and scatter them again with the breath of his mouth? To be humbly and daily petitioned to, that he would please to be hired, at the rate of two millions a year, to be the master of those who had hired him before to be their servant? To have the estates and lives of three kingdoms as much at his disposal, as was the little inheritance of his father, and to be as noble and liberal in the spending of them? And lastly, for there is no end of all the particulars of his glory, to bequeath all this with one word to his posterity? To die with peace at home, and triumph abroad? To be buried among kings, and with more than regal solemnity? And to leave a name behind him not to be extinguished, but with the whole world, which as it is now too little for his praises, so might have been too for his con-

quests, if the short line of his human life could have been stretched out to the extent of his immortal designs?

A Vision, concerning his late pretended Highness, Cromwell the Wicked, etc (1661)

THOMAS FULLER

19. *Mount Edgcumbe*

It was built by Sir Richard Edgcumbe, knight, take his character from one who very well knew him, "mildness and stoutness, diffidence and wisdom, deliberateness of undertakings and sufficiency of effecting, made in him a more commendable than blazing mixture of virtue." In the reign of Queen Mary (about the year 1555) he gave entertainment at one time, for some good space, to the admirals of the English, Spanish, and Netherland, and many noblemen besides. A passage the more remarkable, because I am confident that the admirals of these nations never met since (if ever before) amicably at the same table. Mount Edgcumbe was the scene of this hospitality, a house new-built and named by the aforesaid knight, a square

structure with a round turret at each end, garreted on the top. The hall (rising above the rest) yieldeth a stately sound as one entereth it, the parlor and dining-room afford a large and diversified prospect both of sea and land. The high situation (cool in summer, yet not cold in winter) giveth health, the neighbour river wealth, two blockhouses great safety, and the town of Plymouth good company, unto it. Nor must I forget the fruitful ground about it (pleasure, without profit, is but a flower without a root), stored with wood, timber, fruit, deer, and conies, a sufficiency of pasture, arable and meadow, with stone, lime, marl, and what not.

I write not this to tempt the reader to the breach of the tenth commandment, "to covet his neighbour's house," and one line in the prevention thereof. I have been credibly informed that the Duke of Medina Sidonia, admiral of the Spanish fleet in the '88, was so affected at the sight of this house (though but beholding it at a distance from the sea), that he resolved it for his own possession in the partage of this kingdom (blame him not if choosing best for himself), which they had preconquered in their

hopes and expectation. But he had catched a great cold, had he had no other clothes to wear than those which were to be made of a skin of a bear, not yet killed,

The Worthies of England (*c.* 1641–1661), Cornwall

ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON

20. *The Danger of Atheism*

If it prove true, that there is no God, the religious man may be as happy in this world as the Atheist: nay, the principles of religion and virtue do, in their own nature, tend to make him happier; because they give satisfaction to his mind, and his conscience by this means is freed from many fearful girds and twinges which the Atheist feels. Besides, that the practice of religion and virtue doth naturally promote our temporal felicity. It is more for a man's health, and more for his reputation, and more for his advantage in all other worldly respects to lead a virtuous, than a vicious course of life: and for the other world, if there be no God, the case of the religious man and the Atheist will be alike; because they will both be

extinguished by death, and insensible of any farther happiness or misery.

But then, if the contrary opinion should prove true, that there is a God, and that the souls of men are transmitted out of this world into the other, there to receive the just reward of their actions; then it is plain to every man, at first sight, that the case of the religious man and the Atheist must be vastly different: then, where shall the wicked and the ungodly appear? and what think we shall be the portion of those who have affronted God, and derided his word, and made a mock of every thing that is sacred and religious? what can they expect, but to be rejected by him whom they have renounced, and to feel the terrible effects of that power and justice which they have despised? So that, though the arguments on both sides were equal, yet the danger is not so. On the one side there is none at all, but it is infinite on the other. And consequently, it must be a monstrous folly for any man to make a mock of those things which he knows not whether they be or not; and if they be, of all things in the world they are no jesting matters.

Sermons (*c.* 1664)

21. *Shakespeare in an Undiscerning Age*

He was the man who, of all modern, and perhaps ancient, poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of Nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned, he needed not the spectacles of books to read Nature, he looked inwards and found her there. I cannot say he is everywhere alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him; no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets.

Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.

The consideration of this made Mr. Hales of Eton say, that there was no subject of which any poet ever writ, but he would produce it much better treated of in Shakespeare; and however others are now generally preferred before him, yet the age wherein he lived, which had contemporaries with him Fletcher and Jonson, never equalled them to him in their esteem; and in the last king's court, when Ben's reputation was at highest, Sir John Suckling, and with him the greater part of the courtiers, set our Shakespeare far above him.

An Essay of Dramatic Poesy (1668)

ISAAC WALTON

22. *The Marriage of Richard Hooker*

But the justifying of this doctrine did not prove of so bad consequence, as the kindness of Mrs. Churchman's curing him of his late distemper and cold; for that was so gratefully apprehended by Mr. Hooker, that he thought himself bound in conscience to believe all that she said: so that the good man came to be persuaded

by her, "that he was a man of a tender constitution; and that it was best for him to have a wife, that might prove a nurse to him; such an one as might both prolong his life, and make it more comfortable; and such a one she could and would provide for him, if he thought fit to marry." And he, not considering that "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light;" but like a true Nathanael, fearing no guile, because he meant none, did give her such a power as Eleazer was trusted with, when he was sent to choose a wife for Isaac: for even so he trusted her to choose for him, promising upon a fair summons to return to London, and accept of her choice; and he did so in that, or the year following. Now, the wife provided for him was her daughter Joan, who brought him neither beauty nor portion; and for her conditions, they were too like that wife's, which is by Solomon compared to a dripping house: so that he had no reason to "rejoice in the wife of his youth;" but too just cause to say with the holy Prophet, "Woe is me, that I am constrained to have my habitation in the tents of Kedar!"

This choice of Mr. Hooker's—if it were his

choice—may be wondered at: but let us consider that the Prophet Ezekiel says, "There is a wheel within a wheel;" a secret sacred wheel of Providence,—especially in marriages,—guided by His hand, that "allows not the race to the swift," nor "bread to the wise," nor good wives to good men: and He that can bring good out of evil—for mortals are blind to this reason—only knows why this blessing was denied to patient Job, to meek Moses, and to our as meek and patient Mr. Hooker. But so it was; and let the reader cease to wonder, for "affliction is a divine diet;" which though it be not pleasing to mankind, yet Almighty God hath often, very often, imposed it as good, though bitter physic to those children, whose souls are dearest to him.

And by this means the good man was drawn from the tranquillity of his College; from that garden of piety, of pleasure, of peace, and a sweet conversation, into the thorny wilderness of a busy world; into those corroding cares that attend a married priest, and a country parsonage; which was Drayton-Beauchamp in Buckinghamshire, not far from Aylesbury, and in the Diocese of Lincoln; to which he was presented

by John Cheney, Esq.—then patron of it—the 9th of December, 1584, where he behaved himself so as to give no occasion of evil, but as St. Paul adviseth a minister of God—"in much patience, in afflictions, in anguishes, in necessities, in poverty, and no doubt in long-suffering;" yet troubling no man with his discontents and wants.

And in this condition he continued about a year; in which time his two pupils, Edwin Sandys and George Cranmer, took a journey to see their tutor; where they found him with a book in his hand,—it was the Odes of Horace,—he being then like a humble and innocent Abel, tending his small allotment of sheep in a common field; which he told his pupils he was forced to do then, for that his servant was gone home to dine, and assist his wife to do some necessary household business. When his servant returned and released him, his two pupils attended him unto his house, where their best entertainment was his quiet company, which was presently denied them; for "Richard was called to rock the cradle;" and the rest of their welcome was so like this, that they stayed but till next morn-

ing, which was time enough to discover and pity their tutor's condition; and having in that time remembered, and paraphrased on many of the innocent recreations of their younger days, and other like diversions, given him as much present comfort as they were able, they were forced to leave him to the company of his wife Joan, and seek themselves a quieter lodging. But at their parting from him, Mr. Cranmer said, "Good Tutor, I am sorry your lot is fallen in no better ground, as to your parsonage; and more sorry that your wife proves not a more comfortable companion, after you have wearied yourself in your restless studies." To whom the good man replied, "My dear George, if Saints have usually a double share in the miseries of this life, I, that am none, ought not to repine at what my wise Creator hath appointed for me; but labour—as indeed I do daily—to submit mine to his will, and possess my soul in patience and peace.

The Life of Mr. Richard Hooker (1st Coll. Edit., 1670)

LORD CLARENDON

23. *Character of the Earl of Arundel*

The earl of Arundel was the next to the officers of state who, in his own right and quality, preceded the rest of the Council. He was a man supercilious and proud, who lived always within himself and to himself, conversing little with any who were in common conversation; so that he seemed to live as it were in another nation, his house being a place to which all men resorted who resorted to no other place; strangers, or such who affected to look like strangers and dressed themselves accordingly. He resorted sometimes to the Court, because there only was a greater man than himself; and went thither the seldomer, because there was a greater man than himself. He lived toward all favourites and great officers without any kind of condescension; and rather suffered himself to be ill treated by their power and authority (for he was always in disgrace, and once or twice prisoner in the Tower) than to descend in making any application to them.

And upon these occasions he spent a great interval of his time in several journeys into foreign parts, and with his wife and family had lived some years in Italy, the humour and manners of which nation he seemed most to like and approve, and affected to imitate. He had a good fortune by descent, and a much greater from his wife, who was the sole daughter upon the matter (for neither of the two sisters left any issue) of the great house of Shrewsbury: but his expenses were without any measure, and always exceeded very much his revenue. He was willing to be thought a scholar, and to understand the most mysterious parts of antiquity, because he made a wonderful and costly purchase of excellent statues whilst he was in Italy and Rome (some whereof he could never obtain permission to remove from Rome, though he had paid for them), and had a rare collection of the most curious medals; whereas in truth he was only able to buy them, never to understand them; and as to all parts of learning he was most illiterate, and thought no other part of history considerable but what related to his own family; in which, no doubt, there had been some very mem-

orable persons. It cannot be denied that he had in his person, in his aspect and countenance, the appearance of a great man, which he preserved in his gait and motion. He wore and affected a habit very different from that of the time, such as men had only beheld in the pictures of the most considerable men; all which drew the eyes of most, and the reverence of many, towards him, as the image and representative of the primitive nobility and native gravity of the nobles, when they had been most venerable. But this was only his outside, his nature and true humour being so much disposed to levity and vulgar delights which indeed were very despicable and childish. He was never suspected to love anybody, nor to have the least propensity to justice, charity, or compassion; so that, though he got all he could, and by all the ways he could, and spent much more than he got or had, he was never known to give any thing, nor in all his employments—for he had employments of great profit as well as honour, being sent ambassador extraordinary into Germany for the treaty of that general peace, for which he had great appointments, and in which he did nothing of the

least importance; and, which is more wonderful, he was afterwards made general of the army raised for Scotland, and received full pay as such; and in his own office of Earl Marshal more money was drawn from the people by his authority and pretence of jurisdiction than had ever been extorted by all the officers precedent —yet, I say, in all his offices and employments, never man used or employed by him ever got any fortune under him, nor did ever any man acknowledge any obligation to him. He was rather thought to be without religion than to incline to this or that party of any. He would have been a proper instrument for any tyranny, if he could have had a man tyrant enough to have been advised by him; and had no other affection for the nation or the kingdom than as he had a great share in it, in which, like the great leviathan, he might sport himself, from which he withdrew himself, as soon as he discerned the repose thereof was like to be disturbed, and died in Italy, under the same doubtful character of religion in which he lived.

The History of the Rebellion (1646–70), Bk. i., Chs. 118, 119

24. *Definition of Facetiousness*

But first, it may be demanded what the thing we speak of is, or what this facetiousness doth import? To which question I might reply as Democritus did to him that asked the definition of a man, "It is that which we all see and know:" any one better apprehends what it is by acquaintance, than I can inform him by description. It is indeed a thing so versatile and multiform, appearing in so many shapes, so many postures, so many garbs, so variously apprehended by several eyes and judgments, that it seemeth no less hard to settle a clear and certain notion thereof, than to make a portrait of Proteus, or to define the figure of the fleeting air. Sometimes it lieth in pat allusion to a known story, or in seasonable application of a trivial saying, or in forging an apposite tale: sometimes it playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense, or the affinity of their sound: sometimes it is wrapped in a dress of humorous expression: sometimes it lurketh un-

der an odd similitude: sometimes it is lodged in a sly question, in a smart answer, in a quirkish reason, in a shrewd intimation, in cunningly diverting, or cleverly retorting an objection: sometimes it is couched in a bold scheme of speech, in a tart irony, in a lusty hyperbole, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of contradictions, or an acute nonsense: sometimes a scenical representation of persons or things, a counterfeit speech, a mimical look or gesture passeth for it: sometimes an affected simplicity, sometimes a presumptuous bluntness giveth it being: sometimes it riseth from a lucky hitting upon what is strange, sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious matter to the purpose: often it consisteth in one knows not what, and springeth up one can hardly tell how. Its ways are unaccountable and inexplicable, being answerable to the numberless rovings of fancy and windings of language. It is, in short, a manner of speaking out of the simple and plain way, (such as reason teacheth and proveth things by) which, by a pretty surprising uncouthness in conceit or expression, doth affect and amuse the fancy, stirring in it some wonder, and breeding some de-

light thereto. It raiseth admiration, as signifying a nimble sagacity of apprehension, a special felicity of invention, a vivacity of spirit, and reach of wit more than vulgar: it seeming to argue a rare quickness of parts, that one can fetch in remote conceits applicable; a notable skill, that he can dexterously accommodate them to the purpose before him; together with a lively briskness of humour, not apt to damp those sportful flashes of imagination. (Whence in Aristotle such persons are termed *Επιδέξιοι*, dexterous men; and *Εὔτροποι*, men of facile or versatile manners, who can easily turn themselves to all things, or turn all things to themselves.) It also procureth delight, by gratifying curiosity with its rareness or semblance of difficulty; (as monsters, not for their beauty, but their rarity; as juggling tricks, not for their use, but their abstruseness, are beheld with pleasure;) by diverting the mind from its road of serious thoughts; by instilling gaiety and airiness of spirit; by provoking to such dispositions of spirit, in way of emulation or complaisance; and by seasoning matters, otherwise distasteful or insipid, with an unusual, and thence grateful tang.

Several Sermons against Evil Speaking (between 1672? and 1677)

25. *A Christian Soldier*

I SAW also that the Interpreter took him again by the hand, and led him into a pleasant place, where was built a stately palace, beautiful to behold; at the sight of which, Christian was greatly delighted; he saw also upon the top thereof, certain persons walk, who were clothed all in gold. Then said Christian, may we go in thither? Then the Interpreter took him and led him up towards the door of the palace; and behold at the door stood a great company of men as desirous to go in, but durst not. There also sat a man at a little distance from the door, at a table-side, with a book and his inkhorn before him, to take the name of him that should enter therein: He saw also that in the doorway stood many men in armour to keep it; being resolved to do to the man that would enter what hurt and mischief they could. Now was Christian somewhat in a muse: at last, when every man started back for fear of the armed men; Christian saw a man of a very stout countenance come up to the man that sat

there to write; saying, set down my name, Sir; the which when he had done, he saw the man draw his sword, and put an helmet upon his head, and rush toward the door upon the armed men, who laid upon him with deadly force; but the man, not at all discouraged, fell to cutting and hacking most fiercely; so, after he had received and given many wounds to those that attempted to keep him out, he cut his way through them all, and pressed forward into the palace; at which there was a pleasant voice heard from those that were within, even of the three that walked upon the top of the palace.

> Come in, come in;
> Eternal glory thou shalt win.

So he went in, and was clothed with such garments as they. Then Christian smiled, and said, I think verily I know the meaning of this.

The Pilgrim's Progress (1677)

26. *The Limitations of Human Knowledge*

How short soever their knowledge may come of an universal or perfect comprehension of whatsoever is, it yet secures their great concernments, that they have light enough to lead them to the knowledge of their Maker, and the discovery of their own duties. Men may find matter sufficient to busy their heads and employ their hands with variety, delight, and satisfaction, if they will not boldly quarrel with their own constitution, and throw away the blessings their hands are filled with, because they are not big enough to grasp everything. We shall not have much reason to complain of the narrowness of our minds, if we will but employ them about what may be of use to us; for of that they are very capable: and it will be an unpardonable, as well as childish peevishness, if we undervalue the advantages of our knowledge, and neglect to improve it to the ends for which it was given us, because there are some things that are set out of the reach of it. It will be no excuse to

an idle and untoward servant, who would not attend his business by candlelight, to plead that he had not broad sunshine. The candle that is set up in us, shines bright enough for all our purposes. The discoveries we can make with this, ought to satisfy us: and we shall then use our understandings right, when we entertain all objects in that way and proportion that they are suited to our faculties, and upon those grounds they are capable of being proposed to us; and not peremptorily or intemperately require demonstration, and demand certainty, where probability only is to be had, and which is sufficient to govern all our concernments. If we will disbelieve everything, because we cannot certainly know all things, we shall do muchwhat as wisely as he, who would not use his legs, but sit still and perish, because he had no wings to fly.

Essay concerning Human Understanding (1690), Bk. I., Ch. i

ROBERT SOUTH

27. *On Mutations of Fortune*

For who, that should view the small, despicable beginnings of some things and persons at

first, could imagine or prognosticate those vast and stupendous increases of fortune that have afterwards followed them?

Who, that had looked upon Agathocles first handling the clay, and making pots under his father, and afterwards turning robber, could have thought, that from such a condition, he should come to be king of Sicily?

Who, that had seen Masaniello, a poor fisherman, with his red cap and his angle, could have reckoned it possible to see such a pitiful thing, within a week after, shining in his cloth of gold, and with a word or a nod absolutely commanding the whole city of Naples?

And who, that had beheld such a bankrupt, beggarly fellow as Cromwell, first entering the parliament house with a threadbare torn cloak, and a greasy hat, (and perhaps neither of them paid for,) could have suspected that in the space of so few years, he should, by the murder of one king, and the banishment of another, ascend the throne, be invested in the royal robes, and want nothing of the state of a king, but the changing of his hat into a crown?

It is (as it were) the sport of the Almighty,

thus to baffle and confound the sons of men by such events, as both cross the methods of their actings, and surpass the measure of their expectations. For according to both these, men still suppose a gradual natural progress of things; as that from great, things and persons should grow greater, till at length, by many steps and ascents, they come to be at greatest; not considering, that when Providence designs strange and mighty changes, it gives men wings instead of legs; and instead of climbing leisurely, makes them at once fly to the top and height of all greatness and power. So that the world about them (looking up to those illustrious upstarts) scarce knows who or whence they were, nor they themselves where they are.

A Sermon on Proverbs xvi. 33 (1692)

WILLIAM CONGREVE

28. *Millamant, Mirabell, Mrs. Fainall, Witwoud*

Milla. MIRABELL, did not you take exceptions last night? Oh, ay, and went away. Now I think on't I'm angry—no, now I think on't I'm

pleased:—for I believe I gave you some pain.

Mira. Does that please you?

Milla. Infinitely; I love to give pain.

Mira. You would affect a cruelty which is not in your nature; your true vanity is in the power of pleasing.

Milla. Oh, I ask your pardon for that. One's cruelty is one's power, and when one parts with one's cruelty one parts with one's power, and when one has parted with that, I fancy one's old and ugly.

Mira. Ay, ay; suffer your cruelty to ruin the object of your power, to destroy your lover—and then how vain, how lost a thing you'll be! Nay, 'tis true; you are no longer handsome when you've lost your lover; your beauty dies upon the instant. For beauty is the lover's gift: 'tis he bestows your charms:—your glass is all a cheat. The ugly and the old, whom the looking-glass mortifies, yet after commendation can be flattered by it, and discover beauties in it: for that reflects our praises rather than your face.

Milla. Oh, the vanity of these men! Fainall, d'ye hear him? If they did not commend us,

we were not handsome! Now you must know they could not commend one if one was not handsome. Beauty the lover's gift! Lord, what is a lover, that it can give? Why, one makes lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases; and then, if one pleases, one makes more.

Wit. Very pretty. Why, you make no more of making of lovers, madam, than of making so many card-matches.

Milla. One no more owes one's beauty to a lover than one's wit to an echo. They can but reflect what we look and say: vain empty things if we are silent or unseen, and want a being.

Mira. Yet, to those two vain empty things, you owe two the greatest pleasures of your life.

Milla. How so?

Mira. To your lover you owe the pleasure of hearing yourselves praised, and to an echo the pleasure of hearing yourselves talk.

Wit. But I know a lady that loves talking so incessantly, she won't give an echo fair play; she has that everlasing rotation of tongue that

an echo must wait till she dies before it can catch her last words.

Milla. Oh, fiction; Fainall, let us leave these men.

The Way of the World (1700), Act ii., Sc. v

SIR RICHARD STEELE

29. *Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., Censor of Great Britain*

THIS person dresses just as she did before I writ: as does also the lady to whom I addressed the following billet the same day:

"Madam,

"Let me beg of you to take off the patches at the lower end of your left cheek, and I will allow two more under your left eye, which will contribute more to the symmetry of your face; except you would please to remove the ten black atoms on your ladyship's chin, and wear one large patch instead of them. If so, you may properly enough retain the three patches above mentioned. I am, etc."

This, I thought, had all the civility and reason in the world in it; but whether my letters

are intercepted, or whatever it is, the lady patches as she used to do. It is to be observed by all the charitable society, as an instruction in their epistles, that they tell people of nothing but what is in their power to mend. I shall give another instance of this way of writing: two sisters in Essex Street are eternally gaping out of the window, as if they knew not the value of time, or would call in companions. Upon which I writ the following line:

"Dear Creatures,

"On the receipt of this, shut your casements."

But I went by yesterday, and found them still at the window. What can a man do in this case, but go on, and wrap himself up in his own integrity, with satisfaction only in this melancholy truth, that virtue is its own reward, and that if no one is the better for his admonitions, yet he is himself the more virtuous in that he gave those advices.

The Tatler (1709), No. 67

JOSEPH ADDISON

30. *Sir Roger de Coverley's Church*

My friend Sir Roger, being a good churchman, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing: He has likewise given a handsome pulpit cloth, and railed in the communion table at his own expense. He has often told me, that at his coming to his estate he found the parish very irregular; and that in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassock and a common prayer book: and at the same time employed an itinerant singing-master, who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the psalms; upon which they now very much value themselves, and indeed outdo most of the country churches that I have ever heard.

As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out

of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servant to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions: sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing psalms, half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes, when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces Amen three or four times to the same prayer; and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend, in the midst of the service, calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about, and not disturb the congregation. This John Matthews it seems is remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. This authority of the knight's, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see anything ridiculous in his behaviour; besides that the general good

sense and worthiness of his character makes his friends observe these little singularities as foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities.

As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The knight walks from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side; and every now and then inquires how such an one's wife, or mother, or son, or father do, whom he does not see at church; which is understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent.

The chaplain has often told me, that upon a catechizing day, when Sir Roger has been pleased with a boy that answers well, he has ordered a bible to be given him next day for his encouragement; and sometimes accompanies it with a flitch of bacon to his mother. Sir Roger has likewise added five pounds a year to the clerk's place; and that he may encourage the young fellows to make themselves perfect in the church-service, has promised upon the death of the present incumbent, who is very old, to bestow it according to merit.

The Spectator (1711), No. 112

31. *Man Independent of Circumstances*

BELIEVE me, the providence of God has established such an order in the world, that of all which belongs to us the least valuable parts can alone fall under the will of others. Whatever is best is safest; lies out of the reach of human power; can neither be given nor taken away. Such is this great and beautiful work of nature, the world. Such is the mind of man, which contemplates and admires the world whereof it makes the noblest part. These are inseparably ours, and as long as we remain in one we shall enjoy the other. Let us march therefore intrepidly wherever we are led by the course of human accidents. Wherever they lead us, on what coast soever we are thrown by them, we shall not find ourselves absolutely strangers. We shall meet with men and women, creatures of the same figure, endowed with the same faculties, and born under the same laws of nature. We shall see the same virtues and vices, flowing from the same general principles, but

varied in a thousand different and contrary modes, according to that infinite variety of laws and customs which is established for the same universal end, the preservation of society. We shall feel the same revolution of seasons, and the same sun and moon will guide the course of our year. The same azure vault, bespangled with stars, will be everywhere spread over our heads. There is no part of the world from whence we may not admire those planets which roll, like ours, in different orbits round the same central sun; from whence we may not discover an object still more stupendous, that army of fixed stars hung up in the immense space of the universe, innumerable suns whose beams enlighten and cherish the unknown worlds which roll around them: and whilst I am ravished by such contemplations as these, whilst my soul is thus raised up to heaven, it imports me little what may be the ground I tread upon.

Reflections upon Exile (1716)

DANIEL DEFOE

32. *A Footprint in the Sand*

It happened one day, about noon, going towards my boat, I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a man's naked foot on the shore, which was very plain to be seen in the sand. I stood like one thunderstruck, or as if I had seen an apparition: I listened, I looked round me, but I could hear nothing, nor see anything; I went up to a rising ground, to look farther; I went up the shore and down the shore, but it was all one; I could see no other impression but that one. I went to it again to see if there were any more, and to observe if it might not be my fancy; but there was no room for that, for there was exactly the very print of a foot, toes, heel, and every part of a foot: how it came thither I knew not, nor could in the least imagine; but, after innumerable fluttering thoughts, like a man perfectly confused and out of myself, I came home to my mortification, not feeling, as we say, the ground I went on, but terrified to the last degree; looking behind me at every two or three steps, mistaking

every bush and tree, and fancying every stump at a distance to be a man. Nor is it possible to describe how many various shapes affrighted imagination represented things to me in, how many wild ideas were found every moment in my fancy, and what strange unaccountable whimsies came into my thoughts by the way.

When I came to my castle (for so I think I called it ever after this), I fled into it like one pursued; whether I went over by the ladder, as first contrived, or went in at the hole in the rock, which I called a door, I cannot remember; no, nor could I remember the next morning; for never frighted hare fled to cover or fox to earth with more terror of mind than I to this retreat.

I slept none that night: the farther I was from the occasion of my fright, the greater my apprehensions were; which is something contrary to the nature of such things, and especially to the usual practice of all creatures in fear; but I was so embarrassed with my own frightful ideas of the thing, that I formed nothing but dismal imaginations to myself, even though I was now a great way off of it. Sometimes I fancied it must be the Devil, and reason joined in with me

upon this supposition; for how should any other thing in human shape come into the place? Where was the vessel that brought them? What marks was there of any other footsteps? And how was it possible a man should come there? But then to think that Satan should take human shape upon him in such a place, where there could be no manner of occasion for it, but to leave the print of his foot behind him, and that even for no purpose too, for he could not be sure I should see it,—this was an amusement the other way. I considered that the Devil might have found out abundance of other ways to have terrified me than this of the single print of a foot; that as I lived quite on the other side of the island, he would never have been so simple to leave a mark in a place where it was ten thousand to one whether I should ever see it or not, and in the sand too, which the first surge of the sea, upon a high wind, would have defaced entirely: all this seemed inconsistent with the thing itself, and with all the notions we usually entertain of the subtlety of the Devil.

Abundance of such things as these assisted to argue me out of all apprehensions of its being the

Devil; and I presently concluded, then, that it must be some more dangerous creature, viz., that it must be some of the savages of the main land over against me, who had wandered out to sea in their canoes, and, either driven by the currents or by contrary winds, had made the island, and had been on shore, but were gone away again to sea; being as loth, perhaps, to have stayed in this desolate island as I would have been to have had them.

Robinson Crusoe (1719)

JONATHAN SWIFT

33. *A Humane King*

To confirm what I have now said, and further, to show the miserable effects of a confined education, I shall here insert a passage which will hardly obtain belief. In hopes to ingratiate myself farther into his Majesty's favour, I told him of an invention discovered between three and four hundred years ago, to make a certain powder, into an heap of which the smallest spark of fire falling, would kindle the whole in a moment, athough it were as big as a mountain, and make

it all fly up in the air together, with a noise and agitation greater than thunder. That a proper quantity of this powder rammed into an hollow tube of brass or iron, according to its bigness, would drive a ball of iron or lead with such violence and speed, as nothing was able to sustain its force. That the largest balls thus discharged, would not only destroy whole ranks of an army at once, but batter the strongest walls to the ground, sink down ships, with a thousand men in each, to the bottom of the sea; and, when linked together by a chain, would cut through masts and rigging, divide hundreds of bodies in the middle, and lay all waste before them. That we often put this powder into large hollow balls of iron, and discharged them by an engine into some city we were besieging, which would rip up the pavements, tear the houses to pieces, burst and throw splinters on every side, dashing out the brains of all who came near. That I knew the ingredients very well, which were cheap, and common; I understood the manner of compounding them, and could direct his workmen how to make those tubes, of a size proportionable to all other things in his Majesty's kingdom, and the

largest need not be above an hundred foot long; twenty or thirty of which tubes, charged with the proper quantity of powder and balls, would batter down the walls of the strongest town in his dominions in a few hours, or destroy the whole metropolis, if ever it should pretend to dispute his absolute commands. This I humbly offered to his Majesty, as a small tribute of acknowledgment in return of so many marks that I had received of his royal favour and protection.

The King was struck with horror at the description I had given of those terrible engines, and the proposal I had made. He was amazed how so impotent and grovelling an insect as I (these were his expressions) could entertain such inhuman ideas, and in so familiar a manner as to appear wholly unmoved at all the scenes of blood and desolation, which I had painted as the common effects of those destructive machines, whereof he said, some evil genius, enemy to mankind, must have been the first contriver. As for himself, he protested, that although few things delighted him so much as new discoveries in art or in nature, yet he would rather lose half his kingdom than be privy to such a secret, which he

commanded me, as I valued my life, never to mention any more.

A strange effect of narrow principles and short views! that a prince possessed of every quality which procures veneration, love, and esteem; of strong parts, great wisdom, and profound learning, endued with admirable talents for government, and almost adored by his subjects, should from a nice unnecessary scruple, whereof in Europe we can have no conception, let slip an opportunity put into his hands, that would have made him absolute master of the lives, the liberties, and the fortunes of his people. Neither do I say this with the least intention to detract from the many virtues of that excellent King, whose character I am sensible will on this account be very much lessened in the opinion of an English reader: but I take this defect among them to have risen from their ignorance, they not having hitherto reduced politics into a science, as the more acute wits of Europe have done. For, I remember very well, in a discourse one day with the King, when I happened to say there were several thousand books among us written upon the art of government, it gave him

(directly contrary to my intention) a very mean opinion of our understandings. He professed both to abominate and despise all mystery, refinement, and intrigue, either in a prince or a minister. He could not tell what I meant by secrets of state, where an enemy or some rival nation were not in the case. He confined the knowledge of governing within very narrow bounds; to common sense and reason, to justice and lenity, to the speedy determination of civil and criminal causes; with some other obvious topics, which are not worth considering. And he gave it for his opinion, that whoever could make two ears of corn, or two blades of grass to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together.

Gulliver's Travels (1726). A Voyage to Brobdingnag, vii

GEORGE BERKELEY

34. *The Lowly Origin of Christ*

Lysicles. If all mankind should pretend to persuade me that the Son of God was born upon

earth in a poor family, was spit upon, buffeted, and crucified, lived like a beggar, and died like a thief, I should never believe one syllable of it. Common sense shows every one what figure it would be decent for an earthly prince or ambassador to make; and the Son of God, upon an embassy from heaven, must needs have made an appearance beyond all others of great éclat, and in all respects the very reverse of that which Jesus Christ is reported to have made, even by His own historians.

Euphranor. O Lysicles! though I had ever so much mind to approve and applaud your ingenious reasoning, yet I dare not assent to this for fear of Crito.

Lysicles. Why so?

Euphranor. Because he observed just now, that men judge of things they do not know, by prejudices from things they do know. And I fear he would object that you, who have been conversant in the *grand monde,* having your head filled with a notion of attendants and equipage and liveries, the familiar badges of human grandeur, are less able to judge of that which is truly Divine; and that one who had seen less,

and thought more, would be apt to imagine a pompous parade of worldly greatness not the most becoming the author of a spiritual religion, that was designed to wean men from the world, and raise them above it.

Crito. Do you think, Lysicles, if a man should make his entrance into London in a rich suit of clothes, with a hundred gilt coaches, and a thousand laced footmen; that this would be a more Divine appearance, and have more of true grandeur in it, than if he had power with a word to heal all manner of diseases, to raise the dead to life, and still the raging of the winds and sea?

Lysicles. Without all doubt it must be very agreeable to common sense to suppose, that he could restore others to life who could not save his own. You tell us, indeed, that he rose again from the dead: but what occasion was there for him to die, the just for the unjust, the Son of God for wicked men? And why in that individual place? Why at that very time above all others? Why did he not make his appearance earlier, and preach in all parts of the world, that the benefits might have been more extensive? Account for all these points, and reconcile them,

if you can, to the common notions and plain sense of mankind.

Crito. And what if those, as well as many other points, should lie out of the road that we are acquainted with; must we therefore explode them, and make it a rule to condemn every proceeding as senseless that doth not square with the vulgar sense of man? If the precepts and certain primary tenets of religion appear in the eye of reason good and useful; and if they are also found to be so by their effects; we may, for the sake of them, admit certain other points or doctrines recommended with them to have a good tendency, to be right and true, although we cannot discern their goodness or truth by the mere light of human reason, which may well be supposed an insufficient judge of the proceedings, counsels, and designs of Providence—and this sufficeth to make our conviction reasonable.

It is an allowed point that no man can judge of this or that part of a machine taken by itself, without knowing the whole, the mutual relation or dependence of its parts, and the end for which it was made. And, as this is a point acknowledged in corporeal and natural things, ought we

not, by a parity of reason, to suspend our judgment of a single unaccountable part of the Divine economy, till we are more fully acquainted with the moral system, or world of spirits, and are let into the designs of God's Providence, and have an extensive view of His dispensations past, present, and future? Alas! Lysicles, what do you know even of yourself, whence you come, what you are, or whither you are going? To me it seems that a minute philosopher is like a conceited spectator, who never looked behind the scenes, and yet would judge of the machinery; who, from a transient glimpse of a part only of some one scene, would take upon him to censure the plot of a play.

Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher (1732), Dial. vii, Sec. 15–16

ALEXANDER POPE

35. *In Reply to Lord Hervey*

NEXT, my Lord, as to the obscurity of my *birth*, (a reflection copied also from Mr. Curll and his brethren,) I am sorry to be obliged to such a presumption as to name my family in the

same leaf with your lordship's: but my father had the honour in one instance to resemble you, for he was a younger brother. He did not indeed think it a happiness to bury his elder brother, though he had one who wanted some of those good qualities which yours possessed. How sincerely glad could I be, to pay to that young nobleman's memory the debt I owed to his friendship, whose early death deprived your family of as much wit and honour as he left behind him in any branch of it. But as to my father, I could assure you, my Lord, that he was no mechanic, neither a hatter, nor, which might please your Lordship yet better, a cobbler, but, in truth, of a very tolerable family; and my mother of an ancient one, as well born and educated as that Lady, whom your Lordship made choice of to be the mother of your own children; whose merit, beauty, and vivacity (if transmitted to your posterity) will be a better present than even the noble blood they derive only from you; a mother, on whom I was never obliged so far to reflect, as to say she spoiled me; and a father, who never found himself obliged to say of me that he disapproved my conduct. In a word, my

Lord, I think it enough that my parents, such as they were, never cost me a blush; and that their son, such as he is, never cost them a tear.

A Letter to a Noble Lord (1733)

JOSEPH BUTLER

36. *Possibility of a Future Life*

THAT there is an intelligent Author of nature, and natural Governor of the world, is a principle gone upon in the foregoing Treatise; as proved, and generally known and confessed to be proved.

And the very notion of an intelligent Author of nature, proved by particular final causes, implies a will and a character. Now, as our whole nature, the nature which he has given us, leads us to conclude his will and character to be moral, just, and good: so we can scarce in imagination conceive, what it can be otherwise. However, in consequence of this his will and character, whatever it be, he formed the universe as it is, and carries on the course of it as he does, rather than in any other manner; and has assigned to

us, and to all living creatures, a part and a lot in it. Irrational creatures act this their part, and enjoy and undergo the pleasures and the pains allotted them, without any reflection. But one would think it impossible, that creatures endued with reason could avoid reflecting sometimes upon all this: reflecting, if not from whence we came, yet, at least, whither we are going; and what the mysterious scheme, in the midst of which we find ourselves, will, at length, come out and produce: a scheme in which it is certain we are highly interested, and in which we may be interested even beyond conception.

For many things prove it palpably absurd to conclude, that we shall cease to be, at death. Particular analogies do most sensibly show us, that there is nothing to be thought strange, in our being to exist in another state of life. And that we are now living beings, affords a strong probability that we shall *continue* so; unless there be some positive ground, and there is none from reason or analogy, to think death will destroy us. Were a persuasion of this kind ever so well grounded, there would, surely, be little reason to take pleasure in it. But indeed it can

have no other ground, than some such imagination, as that of our gross bodies being ourselves; which is contrary to experience. Experience too most clearly shows us the folly of concluding, from the body and the living agent affecting each other mutually, that the dissolution of the former is the destruction of the latter. And there are remarkable instances of their not affecting each other, which lead us to a contrary conclusion. The supposition then, which in all reason we are to go upon, is, that our living nature will *continue* after death.

And it is infinitely unreasonable to form an institution of life, or to act, upon any other supposition. Now all expectation of immortality, whether more or less certain, opens an unbounded prospect to our hopes and our fears: since we see the constitution of nature is such, as to admit of misery as well as to be productive of happiness, and experience ourselves to partake of both in some degree; and since we cannot but know, what higher degrees of both we are capable of. And there is no presumption against believing further, that our future interest depends upon our present behaviour: for we see

our present interest doth: and that the happiness and misery, which are naturally annexed to our actions, very frequently do not follow, till long after the actions are done, to which they are respectively annexed. So that were speculation to leave us uncertain, whether it were likely, that the Author of nature, in giving happiness and misery to his creatures, hath regard to their actions or not: yet, since we find by experience that he hath such regard, the whole sense of things which he has given us, plainly leads us, at once and without any elaborate inquiries, to think, that it may, indeed must, be to good actions chiefly that he hath annexed happiness, and to bad actions misery; or that he will, upon the whole, reward those who do well, and punish those who do evil.

The Analogy of Religion (1736), Pt. i., Ch. viii

HENRY FIELDING

37. *Parson Adams questions the Landlord*

"WHY, prithee, friend," cries the host, "dost thou pretend never to have told a lie in thy life?" —"Never a malicious one, I am certain," an-

swered Adams, "nor with a design to injure the reputation of any man living."—"Pugh! malicious; no, no," replied the host, "not malicious with a design to hang a man, or bring him into trouble; but surely, out of love to oneself, one must speak better of a friend than an enemy."—"Out of love to yourself, you should confine yourself to truth," says Adams, "for by doing otherwise you injure the noblest part of yourself, your immortal soul. I can hardly believe any man such an idiot to risk the loss of that by trifling gain, and the greatest gain in this world is but dirt in comparison of what shall be revealed hereafter." Upon which the host, taking up the cup, with a smile, drank a health to hereafter; adding, "he was for something present."—"Why," says Adams very gravely, "do not you believe in another world?" To which the host answered, "Yes; he was no atheist."—"And you believe you have an immortal soul?" cries Adams. He answered, "God forbid he should not."—"And heaven and hell?" said the parson. The host then bid him "not to profane; for those were things not to be mentioned nor thought of but in church." Adams asked him, "why he

went to church, if what he learned there had no influence on his conduct in life?" "I go to church," answered the host, "to say my prayers and behave godly."—"And dost not thou," cried Adams, "believe what thou hearest at church?"—"Most part of it, master," returned the host. "And dost not thou then tremble," cries Adams, "at the thought of eternal punishment?"—"As for that, master," said he, "I never once thought about it; but what signifies talking about matters so far off? The mug is out, shall I draw another?"

The Adventures of Joseph Andrews (1742), Bk., ii., Ch. iii

DAVID HUME

38. *Of the Middle Station of Life*

THE moral of the following fable will easily discover itself, without my explaining it. One rivulet meeting another, with whom he had been long united in strictest amity, with noisy haughtiness and disdain thus bespoke him—"What, brother! still in the same state! Still low and creeping! Are you not ashamed, when you be-

hold me, who though lately in a like condition with you, am now become a great river, and shall shortly be able to rival the Danube or the Rhine, provided those friendly rains continue which have favoured my banks, but neglected yours?" "Very true," replies the humble rivulet: "You are now, indeed, swoln to a great size; but methinks you are become withal somewhat turbulent and muddy. I am contented with my low condition and my purity."

Instead of commenting upon this fable, I shall take occasion from it to compare the different stations of life, and to persuade such of my readers as are placed in the middle station to be satisfied with it, as the most eligible of all others. These form the most numerous rank of men that can be supposed susceptible of philosophy; and therefore all discourses of morality ought principally to be addressed to them. The great are too much immersed in pleasure, and the poor too much occupied in providing for the necessities of life, to hearken to the calm voice of reason. The middle station, as it is most happy in many respects, so particularly in this, that a man placed in it can, with the greatest leisure, con-

sider his own happiness, and reap a new enjoyment, from comparing his situation with that of persons above or below him.

Agur's prayer is sufficiently noted—"Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die; remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." The middle station is here justly recommended, as affording the fullest security for virtue; and I may also add, that it gives opportunity for the most ample exercise of it, and furnishes employment for every good quality which we can possibly be possessed of. Those who are placed among the lower ranks of men, have little opportunity of exerting any other virtue besides those of patience, resignation, industry, and integrity. Those who are advanced into the higher stations, have full employment for their generosity, humanity, affability, and charity. When a man lies betwixt these two extremes, he can exert the former virtues towards his superiors and the latter towards his inferiors. Every

moral quality which the human soul is susceptible of, may have its turn, and be called up to action; and a man may, after this manner, be much more certain of his progress in virtue, than where his good qualities lie dormant, and without employment.

Essays, Moral and Political (1742), Vol. ii

LORD CHESTERFIELD

39. *Some Characteristics of Vulgarity*

A VULGAR, ordinary way of thinking, acting, or speaking, implies a low education, and a habit of low company. Young people contract it at school, or among servants, with whom they are too often used to converse; but, after they frequent good company, they must want attention and observation very much, if they do not lay it quite aside. And indeed, if they do not, good company will be very apt to lay them aside. The various kinds of vulgarisms are infinite; I cannot pretend to point them out to you; but I will give some samples, by which you may guess at the rest.

A vulgar man is captious and jealous; eager

and impetuous about trifles. He suspects himself to be slighted, thinks everything that is said meant at him; if the company happens to laugh, he is persuaded they laugh at him; he grows angry and testy, says something very impertinent, and draws himself into a scrape, by showing what he calls a proper spirit, and asserting himself. A man of fashion does not suppose himself to be either the sole or principal object of the thoughts, looks, or words of the company; and never suspects that he is either slighted or laughed at, unless he is conscious that he deserves it. And if (which very seldom happens) the company is absurd or ill-bred enough to do either, he does not care twopence, unless the insult be so gross and plain as to require satisfaction of another kind. As he is above trifles, he is never vehement and eager about them; and, wherever they are concerned, rather acquiesces than wrangles. A vulgar man's conversation always savours strongly of the lowness of his education and company. It turns chiefly upon his domestic affairs, his servants, the excellent order he keeps in his own family, and the little anecdotes of the neighbourhood; all which he re-

lates with emphasis, as interesting matters. He is a man gossip.

Vulgarism in language is the next, and distinguishing characteristic of bad company and a bad education. A man of fashion avoids nothing with more care than that. Proverbial expressions and trite sayings are the flowers of the rhetoric of a vulgar man. Would he say that men differ in their tastes; he both supports and adorns that opinion, by the good old saying, as he respectfully calls it, that *what is one man's Meat is another man's Poison.* If anybody attempts being *smart,* as he calls it, upon him, he gives them *Tit for Tat,* ay, that he does. He has always some favourite word for the time being; which, for the sake of using often, he commonly abuses: such as *vastly* angry, *vastly* kind, *vastly* handsome, and *vastly* ugly. Even his pronunciation of proper words carries the mark of the beast along with it. He calls the earth, *yearth;* he is *obleiged,* not *obliged,* to you. He goes *to wards,* and not *towards,* such a place. He sometimes affects hard words by way of ornament, which he always mangles, like a learned woman. A man of fashion never has recourse to proverbs and

vulgar aphorisms; uses neither favourite words nor hard words; but takes great care to speak very correctly and grammatically, and to pronounce properly; that is, according to the usage of the best companies.

Letters to his Son (1749), CX

HORACE WALPOLE (LORD ORFORD)

40. *The Beautiful Miss Gunnings*

Our beauties are returned, and have done no execution. The French would not conceive that Lady Caroline Petersham ever had been handsome, nor that my Lady Coventry has much pretence to be so now. Indeed all the traveled English allow that there is a Madame de Brionne handsomer, and a finer figure. Poor Lady Coventry was under piteous disadvantages; for besides being very silly, ignorant of the world, . . . speaking no French, and suffered to wear neither red nor powder, she had that perpetual drawback upon her beauty, her lord, who is sillier in a wise way, as ignorant, ill-bred, and speaking very little French himself—just enough to show

how ill-bred he is. The Duke de Luxemburg told him he had called up my Lady Coventry's coach; my Lord replied, "Vous avez fort bien fait." He is jealous, prude, and scrupulous; at a dinner at Sir John Bland's, before sixteen persons, he coursed his wife round the table, on suspecting she had stolen on a little red, seized her, scrubbed it off by force with a napkin, and then told her, that since she had deceived him and broke her promise, he would carry her back directly to England. They were pressed to stay for the great *fête* at St. Cloud; he excused himself, "because it would make him miss a music-meeting at Worcester;" and she excused herself from the fireworks at Madame Pompadour's, "because it was her dancing-master's hour." I will tell you but one more anecdote, and I think you cannot be imperfect in your ideas of them. The Maréchale de Lowendahl was pleased with an English fan Lady Coventry had, who very civilly gave it to her: my Lord made her write for it again next morning, "because he had given it her before marriage, and her parting with it would make an irreparable breach," and send an old one in the room of it! She complains to

everybody she meets, "How odd it is that my Lord should use her so ill, when she knows he has so great a regard that he would die for her, and when he was so good as to marry her without a shilling!" Her sister's history is not unentertaining: Duke Hamilton is the abstract of Scotch pride; he and the Duchess at their own house walk in to dinner before their company, sit together at the upper end of their own table, eat off the same plate, and drink to nobody beneath the rank of Earl—would not one wonder how they could get anybody either above or below that rank to dine with them at all? I don't know whether you will not think all these very trifling histories; but for myself, I love anything that marks a character strongly.

Letters of Horace Walpole (1752)

LADY MARY WORTLEY-MONTAGU

41. *An Italian Doctor*

I DRANK the water next morning, and, with a few doses of my physician's prescription, in three days found myself in perfect health, which ap-

peared almost a miracle to all that saw me. You may imagine I am willing to submit to the orders of one that I must acknowledge the instrument of saving my life, though they are not entirely conformable to my will and pleasure. He has sentenced me to a long continuance here, which, he says, is absolutely necessary to the confirmation of my health, and would persuade me that my illness has been wholly owing to my omission of drinking the waters these two years past. I dare not contradict him, and must own he deserves (from the various surprising cures I have seen) the name given to him in this country of the miraculous man. Both his character and practice are so singular, I cannot forbear giving you some account of them. He will not permit his patients to have either surgeon or apothecary: he performs all the operations of the first with great dexterity; and whatever compounds he gives, he makes in his own house: those are very few; the juice of herbs, and these waters, being commonly his sole prescriptions. He has very little learning, and professes drawing all his knowledge from experience, which he possesses, perhaps, in a greater degree than any other mor-

tal, being the seventh doctor of his family in a direct line. His forefathers have all of them left journals and registers solely for the use of their posterity, none of them having published anything; and he has recourse to these manuscripts on every difficult case, the veracity of which, at least, is unquestionable. His vivacity is prodigious, and he is indefatigable in his industry: but what most distinguishes him is a disinterestedness I never saw in any other: he is as regular in his attendance on the poorest peasant, from whom he never can receive one farthing, as on the richest of the nobility; and, whenever he is wanted, will climb three or four miles in the mountains, in the hottest sun, or heaviest rain, where a horse cannot go, to arrive at a cottage, where, if their condition requires it, he does not only give them advice and medicines gratis, but bread, wine, and whatever is needful. There never passes a week without one or more of these expeditions. His last visit is generally to me. I often see him as dirty and tired as a foot post, having eat nothing all day but a roll or two that he carries in his pocket, yet blest with such a perpetual flow of spirits, he is always gay to a

degree above cheerfulness. There is a peculiarity in his character that I hope will incline you to forgive my drawing it.

Letters (1754)

SAMUEL RICHARDSON

42. *Miss Grandison, Harriet Byron, Lady L.*

Miss Gr. And now tell me, Harriet, what can be your motive for refusing such a man as this?

Harriet. I wish, my dear, you would not talk to me of these men. I am sick of them all—Sir Hargrave has cured me—

Miss Gr. You fib, my dear—But did you ever see Lord D.?

Harriet. No, indeed!

Miss Gr. "No, indeed!"—Why then you are a simpleton, child. What, refuse a man, an Earl too! in the bloom of his years, 12,000 good pounds a year! yet never have seen him—Your motives, child! Your motives!—I wish you are not already—There she stopt.

Harriet. And I wish, Miss Grandison, with all my heart, if that would tame you, that you

were in love over head and ears, and could not help it!

Miss Gr. And wish you me that for spite, or to please me?—I *am* in love, my dear; and nothing keeps me in countenance, but having company among the grave ones. Dearly do I love to find girls out. Why, I found out Lady L. before she would own a tittle of the matter. So prim!—"And *how can you think so,* Charlotte? *Who, I, in love!* No indeed! No man has a place in *my* heart!"—Then I was resolved to have her secret out. I began with my *round-abouts,* and my *suppose's*—A *leer*—as thus—[I was both vexed and pleased with her archness] and then a *suppose*—Then came a blush—"Why, Charlotte, I cannot but *say,* that if I were *obliged* to have 'the one man or the other'"—Then came a sigh, endeavoured in haste to be returned to the heart whence it came; and when it could not find its way back, to be cut into three-halves, as the Irishman said; that is, into two half-sighs, and a hem; and a "Get you gone, for an impertinent."—As much as to say, "You have it!"—And when I found I *had* and she owned it; why then I put my mad head to her

grave one; and we had but one heart betwixt us.

Lady L. (Laughing)—Out of breath, Charlotte, I hope.

Miss Gr. Not yet—How often have I kept watch and ward for her! Sometimes have I lent her my dressing-room for their love meetings: Yet, for the *world,* she would not marry without her papa's consent: No, but like the rest of us, she would suffer her affections to be *engaged,* without letting him know a syllable of the matter. —Very true, Lady L., what signifies looking serious?

Lady L. Strange creature!

Miss Gr. Once or twice did I change dresses with her. In short, I was a perfect Abigail to her in the affair: And, let me tell you, two Sisters, agreed to manage a love-affair, have advantages over even a Lady and her woman.

Lady L. Mad creature!

Miss Gr. All this I did for her without fee or reward; only from the dear delight of promoting the good work, and upon the Christian principle of do as you would be done by.—Is not all this true, Lady L.? Deny it if you can.

Lady L. And have you *done,* Charlotte? Ah! my dear Miss Byron, you'll never do anything with this girl, except you hear all she has to say. And if you *have* a secret, 'tis better to let her know it at first. Charlotte is a generous girl after all; but sometimes, as now, a very impertinent one—

History of Sir Charles Grandison (1754), Vol. 2, Let. 5

THOMAS GRAY

43. *Froissart's "Chronicles"*

I AM much obliged to you for your antique news: *Froissard* is a favourite book of mine (though I have not attentively read him, but only dipp'd here and there) and it is strange to me that people who would give thousands for a dozen Portraits (originals of that time) to furnish a Gallery, should never cast an eye on so many moving Pictures of the life, actions, manners, and thoughts of their ancestors done on the spot, and in strong though simple colours. In the succeeding century *Froissard* (I find) was read with great satisfaction by everybody, that could read;

and on the same footing with King Arthur, Sir Tristram, and Archbishop Turpin: not because they thought him a fabulous writer, but because they took them all for true and authentic Historians. To so little purpose was it in that age for a man to be at the pains of writing truth! Pray, are you come to the four Irish Kings, that went to school to K. Richard y^e^ 2d.'s Master of the Ceremonies; and the man who informed Froissard of all he had seen in St. Patrick's Purgatory?

Letters (1760)

LAURENCE STERNE

44. *A Discussion regarding Le Fevre*

Thou hast left this matter short, said my uncle Toby to the Corporal, as he was putting him to bed,—and I will tell thee in what, Trim.—In the first place, when thou madest an offer of my services to Le Fevre,—as sickness and travelling are both expensive,—and thou knowest he was but a poor Lieutenant, with a son to subsist as well as himself out of his pay,—that thou didst

not make an offer to him of my purse; because, had he stood in need, thou knowest, Trim, he had been as welcome to it as myself,——Your Honour knows said the Corporal, I had no orders.——True, quoth my uncle Toby,—thou didst very right, Trim, as a soldier,—but certainly very wrong as a man.

In the second place, for which, indeed, thou hast the same excuse, continued my uncle Toby, —when thou offeredst him whatever was in my house,—thou shouldst have offered him my house too.—A sick brother officer should have the best quarters, Trim: and if we had him with us, —we could tend and look to him.—Thou art an excellent nurse thyself, Trim;—and what with thy care of him, and the old woman's, and his boy's, and mine together, we might recruit him again at once, and set him upon his legs.

——In a fortnight or three weeks, added my uncle Toby, smiling,—he might march.——He will never march, an' please your Honour, in this world, said the Corporal.——He *will* march, said my uncle Toby, rising up from the side of the bed with one shoe off.——An' please your Honour, said the Corporal, he will never march, but to

his grave.——He *shall* march, cried my uncle Toby, marching the foot which had a shoe on, though without advancing an inch,—he *shall* march to his regiment.——He cannot stand it, said the Corporal.——He shall be supported, said my uncle Toby.——He'll drop at last, said the Corporal; and what will become of his boy? ——He *shall not* drop, said my uncle Toby, firmly.——Ah well-a-day!—do what we can for him, said Trim, maintaining his point,—the poor soul will die.——*He shall not die, by G—!* cried my uncle Toby.

——The *accusing spirit,* which flew up to Heaven's chancery with the oath, blushed as he gave it in;—and the *recording angel,* as he wrote it down, dropp'd a tear upon the word, and blotted it out for ever.

The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent. (1762), Vol. vi., Ch. 8

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

45. *George Primrose goes to London*

As my eldest son was bred a scholar, I determined to send him to town, where his abilities

might contribute to our support and his own. The separation of friends and families is, perhaps, one of the most distressful circumstances attendant on penury. The day soon arrived on which we were to disperse for the first time. My son, after taking leave of his mother and the rest, who mingled their tears with their kisses, came to ask a blessing from me This I gave him from my heart, and which, added to five guineas, was all the patrimony I had now to bestow. "You are going, my boy," cried I, "to London on foot, in the manner Hooker, your great ancestor, travelled there before you. Take from me the same horse that was given him by the good bishop Jewel, this staff, and take this book too, it will be your comfort on the way: these two lines in it are worth a million, 'I have been young, and now am old; yet never saw I the righteous man forsaken, or his seed begging their bread.' Let this be your consolation as you travel on. Go, my boy, whatever be thy fortune let me see thee once a year; still keep a good heart, and farewell." As he was possessed of integrity and honour, I was under no apprehensions from throwing him naked into the

amphitheatre of life; for I knew he would act a good part whether he rose or fell.

The Vicar of Wakefield (1766), Ch. iii

WILLIAM ROBERTSON

46. *The Death of the Chevalier Bayard*

At the beginning of the charge, Bonnivet, while exerting himself with much valour, was wounded so dangerously as obliged him to quit the field; and the conduct of the rear was committed to the Chevalier Bayard, who, though so much a stranger to the arts of a court that he never rose to the chief command, was always called, in times of real danger, to the posts of greatest difficulty and importance. He put himself at the head of the men-at-arms, and, animating them by his presence and example to sustain the whole shock of the enemy's troops, he gained time for the rest of his countrymen to make good their retreat. But in this service he received a wound which he immediately perceived to be mortal, and, being unable to continue any longer on horseback, he ordered one of his attendants to place him under

a tree, with his face towards the enemy; then, fixing his eyes on the guard of his sword, which he held up instead of a cross, he addressed his prayers to God, and in this posture, which became his character both as a soldier and as a Christian, he calmly awaited the approach of death. Bourbon, who led the foremost of the enemy's troops, found him in this situation, and expressed regret and pity at the sight. "Pity not me," cried the high-spirited chevalier. "I die as a man of honour ought, in the discharge of my duty: they indeed are objects of pity who fight against their king, their country, and their oath." The marquis de Pescara, passing soon after, manifested his admiration of Bayard's virtues, and his sorrow for his fall, with the generosity of a gallant enemy, and finding that he could not be removed with safety from that spot, ordered a tent to be pitched there, and appointed proper persons to attend him. He died, notwithstanding their care, as his ancestors for several generations had done, in the field of battle. Pescara ordered his body to be embalmed and sent to his relations; and such was the respect paid to military merit in that age that the duke of

Savoy commanded it to be received with royal honours in all the cities of his dominions: in Dauphiné, Bayard's native country, the people of all ranks came out in a solemn procession to meet it.

History of the Reign of Charles V. (1769), Bk. iii

TOBIAS GEORGE SMOLLETT

47. *Lismahago's Revenge*

In the meantime, Lady Bullford conducted us into the garden to see a fish-pond just finished, which Mr. Bramble censured as being too near the parlour, where the knight now sat by himself, dozing in an elbow-chair after the fatigues of his morning achievement. In this situation he reclined, with his feet wrapped in flannel, and supported in a line with his body; when the door flying open with a violent shock, Lieutenant Lismahago rushed into the room with horror in his looks, exclaiming, "A mad dog! a mad dog!" and throwing up the window-sash, leaped into the garden. Sir Thomas, waked by this tremendous exclamation, started up, and, forgetting his

gout, followed the lieutenant's example by a kind of instinctive impulse. He not only bolted through the window like an arrow from a bow, but ran up to his middle in the pond, before he gave the least sign of recollection. Then the captain began to bawl——"Lord, have mercy upon us!—Pray, take care of the gentleman!—For God's sake, mind your footing, my dear boy!—Get warm blankets!—Comfort his poor carcass!—Warm the bed in the green room!"

Lady Bullford was thunderstruck at this phenomenon, and the rest of the company gazed in silent astonishment, while the servants hastened to assist their master, who suffered himself to be carried back into the parlour without speaking a word. Being instantly accommodated with dry clothes and flannels, comforted with a cordial, and replaced *in statu quo,* one of the maids was ordered to chafe his lower extremities, an operation in consequence of which his senses seemed to return, and his good humour to revive. As we had followed him into the room, he looked at every individual in his turn, with a certain ludicrous expression in his countenance; but fixed his eye in particular upon Lismahago, who

presented him with a pinch of snuff, and when he took it in silence——"Sir Thomas Bullford," said he, "I am much obliged to you for all your favours, and some of them I have endeavoured to repay in your own coin."——"Give me thy hand," cried the baronet; "thou hast, indeed, paid me *Scot and lot;* and even left a balance in my hands, for which, in presence of this company, I promise to be accountable." So saying, he laughed very heartily, and even seemed to enjoy the retaliation which had been exacted at his own expense: but Lady Bullford looked very grave; and, in all probability, thought the lieutenant had carried his resentment too far, considering that her husband was valetudinary. But, according to the proverb, *He that will play at bowls must expect to meet with rubbers.*

The Expedition of Humphry Clinker (1771), Vol. iii

ADAM SMITH

48. *Taxes upon the Necessaries of Life*

Taxes upon luxuries are finally paid by the consumers of the commodities taxed, without any

retribution. They fall indifferently upon every species of revenue, the wages of labour, the profits of stock, and the rent of land. Taxes upon necessaries, so far as they affect the labouring poor, are finally paid, partly by landlords in the diminished rent of their lands, and partly by rich consumers, whether landlords or others, in the advanced price of manufactured goods; and always with a considerable overcharge. The advanced price of such manufactures as are real necessaries of life, and are destined for the consumption of the poor, of coarse woollens, for example, must be compensated to the poor by a further advancement of their wages. The middling and superior ranks of people, if they understood their own interest, ought always to oppose all taxes upon the necessaries of life, as well as all direct taxes upon the wages of labour. The final payment of both the one and the other falls altogether upon themselves, and always with a considerable overcharge. They fall heaviest upon the landlords, who always pay in a double capacity; in that of landlords, by the reduction of their rent; and in that of rich consumers, by the increase of their expense. The observation

of Sir Matthew Decker, that certain taxes are, in the price of certain goods, sometimes repeated and accumulated four or five times, is perfectly just with regard to taxes upon the necessaries of life. In the price of leather, for example, you must pay, not only for the tax upon the leather of your own shoes, but for a part of that upon those of the shoemaker and the tanner. You must pay too for the tax upon the salt, upon the soap, and upon the candles which those workmen consume while employed in your service, and for the tax upon the leather, which the salt-maker, the soap-maker, and the candle-maker consume while employed in their service.

The Wealth of Nations (1776), Bk. v., Ch. ii

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

49. *Charles Surface sells his Ancestors' Portraits*

Chas. Surf. But come, get to your pulpit, Mr. Auctioneer; here's an old gouty chair of my grandfather's will answer the purpose.

Care. Ay, ay, this will do. But, Charles, I

haven't a hammer; and what's an auctioneer without his hammer?

Chas. Surf. Egad, that's true. What parchment have we here? Oh, our genealogy in full. [*Taking pedigree down.*] Here, Careless, you shall have no common bit of mahogany, here's the family tree for you, you rogue! This shall be your hammer, and now you may knock down my ancestors with their own pedigree.

Sir Oliv. What an unnatural rogue!—an *ex post facto* parricide! [*Aside.*

Care. Yes, yes, here's a list of your generation indeed;—faith, Charles, this is the most convenient thing you could have found for the business, for 'twill not only serve as a hammer, but a catalogue into the bargain. Come, begin—A-going, a-going, a-going!

Chas. Surf. Bravo, Careless! Well, here's my great uncle, Sir Richard Ravelin, a marvellous good general in his day, I assure you. He served in all the Duke of Marlborough's wars, and got that cut over his eye at the battle of Malplaquet. What say you, Mr. Premium? look at him—there's a hero! not cut out of his feathers, as your modern clipped captains are, but

enveloped in wig and regimentals, as a general should be. What do you bid?

Sir Oliv. [*Aside to Moses.*] Bid him speak.

Mos. Mr. Premium would have you speak.

Chas. Surf. Why, then, he shall have him for ten pounds, and I'm sure that's not dear for a staff-officer.

Sir Oliv. [*Aside.*] Heaven deliver me! his famous uncle Richard for ten pounds!—[*Aloud.*] Very well, sir, I take him at that.

Chas. Surf. Careless, knock down my uncle Richard.—Here, now, is a maiden sister of his, my great-aunt Deborah, done by Kneller, in his best manner, and esteemed a very formidable likeness. There she is, you see, a shepherdess feeding her flock. You shall have her for five pounds ten—the sheep are worth the money.

Sir Oliv. [*Aside.*] Ah! poor Deborah! a woman who set such a value on herself!—[*Aloud.*] Five pounds ten—she's mine.

Chas. Surf. Knock down my aunt Deborah!

The School for Scandal (1777), Act iv., Sc. i

50. *Unamiable Sisters*

Some time after this, Miss Polly contrived to tell *her* story. She assured me, with much tittering, that her sister was in a great fright lest she should be married first. "So I make her believe that I will," continued she; "for I love dearly to plague her a little; though, I declare, I don't intend to have Mr. Brown in reality;—I'm sure I don't like him half well enough,—do you, Miss?"

"It is not possible for me to judge of his merits," said I, "as I am entirely a stranger to him."

"But what do you think of him, Miss?"

"Why, really, I—I don't know."

"But do you think him handsome? Some people reckon him to have a good pretty person;—but I'm sure, for my part, I think he's monstrous ugly:—don't *you,* Miss?"

"I am no judge,—but I think his person is very—very well."

"*Very well!*—Why, pray, Miss," in a tone of vexation, "what fault can you find with it?"

"O, none at all!"

"I'm sure you must be very ill-natured if you could. Now there's Biddy says she thinks nothing of him,—but I know it's all out of spite. You must know, Miss, it makes her as mad as can be that I should have a lover before her; but she's so proud that nobody will court her, and I often tell her she'll die an old maid. But the thing is, she has taken it into her head to have a liking for Mr. Smith, as lodges on the first floor; but, Lord, he'll never have her, for he's quite a fine gentleman; and besides, Mr. Brown heard him say one day, that he'd never marry as long as he lived, for he'd no opinion of matrimony."

"And did you tell your sister this?"

"O, to be sure, I told her directly; but she did not mind me; however, if she will be a fool she must."

This extreme want of affection and good-nature increased the distaste I already felt for these unamiable sisters; and a confidence so entirely un-

solicited and unnecessary, manifested equally their folly and their want of decency.

Evelina (1778), Let. xl

SAMUEL JOHNSON

51. *Pope's professed Contempt of the World*

He very frequently professes contempt of the world, and represents himself as looking on mankind, sometimes with gay indifference, as on emmets of a hillock, below his serious attention; and sometimes with gloomy indignation, as on monsters more worthy of hatred than of pity. These were dispositions apparently counterfeited. How could he despise those whom he lived by pleasing, and on whose approbation his esteem of himself was superstructed? Why should he hate those to whose favour he owed his honour and his ease? Of things that terminate in human life, the world is the proper judge; to despise its sentence, if it were possible, is not just; and if it were just, is not possible. Pope was far enough from this unreasonable temper; he was sufficiently "a fool to Fame," and his fault was

that he pretended to neglect it. His levity and his sullenness were only in his Letters; he passed through common life sometimes vexed, and sometimes pleased, with the natural emotions of common men.

Lives of the Poets (1781), Vol. vii

WILLIAM COWPER

52. *The Death of the Fox*

One day last week, Mrs. Unwin and I, having taken our morning walk, and returning homeward through the Wilderness, met the Throckmortons. A minute after we had met them, we heard the cry of hounds at no great distance, and mounting the broad stump of an elm, which had been felled, and by the aid of which we were enabled to look over the wall, we saw them. They were all that time in our orchard; presently we heard a terrier, belonging to Mrs. Throckmorton, which you may remember by the name of Fury, yelping with much vehemence, and saw her running through the thickets, within a few yards of us, at her utmost speed, as if in pursuit of some-

thing which we doubted not was the fox. Before we could reach the other end of the Wilderness, the hounds entered also; and when we arrived at the gate which opens into the grove, there we found the whole weary cavalcade assembled. The huntsman dismounting begged leave to follow his hounds on foot, for he was sure, he said, that they killed him,—a conclusion which, I suppose, he drew from their profound silence. He was accordingly admitted, and with a sagacity that would not have dishonoured the best hound in the world, pursuing precisely the same track which the fox and the dogs had taken, though he had never had a glimpse of either after their first entrance through the rails, arrived where he found the slaughtered prey. He soon produced dead reynard, and rejoined us in the grove with all his dogs about him. Having an opportunity to see a ceremony, which I was pretty sure would never fall in my way again, I determined to stay, and to notice all that passed with the most minute attention. The huntsman having by the aid of a pitchfork lodged reynard on the arm of an elm, at the height of about nine feet from the ground, here left him for a considerable time.

The gentlemen sat on their horses contemplating the fox, for which they had toiled so hard; and the hounds assembled at the foot of the tree, with faces not less expressive of the most rational delight, contemplated the same object. The huntsman remounted, cut off a foot, and threw it to the hounds—one of them swallowed it whole like a bolus. He then once more alighted, and drawing down the fox by the hinder legs, desired the people, who were by this time rather numerous, to open a lane for him to the right and left. He was instantly obeyed, when, throwing the fox to the distance of some yards, and screaming like a fiend, "tear him to pieces"—at least six times repeatedly—he consigned him over absolutely to the pack, who in a few minutes devoured him completely. Thus, my dear, as Virgil says, what none of the gods could have ventured to promise me, time itself, pursuing its accustomed course, has of its own accord presented me with. I have been in at the death of a fox, and you now know as much of the matter as I, who am as well informed as any sportsman in England.

Letters (1788)

EDWARD GIBBON

53. *Gibbon as a Lover*

I HESITATE, from the apprehension of ridicule, when I approach the delicate subject of my early love. By this word I do not mean the polite attention, the gallantry, without hope or design, which has originated in the spirit of chivalry, and is interwoven with the texture of French manners. I understand by this passion the union of desire, friendship, and tenderness, which is inflamed by a single female, which prefers her to the rest of her sex, and which seeks her possession as the supreme or the sole happiness of our being. I need not blush at recollecting the object of my choice; and though my love was disappointed of success, I am rather proud that I was once capable of feeling such a pure and exalted sentiment. The personal attractions of Mademoiselle Susan Curchod were embellished by the virtues and talents of the mind. Her fortune was humble, but her family was re-

spectable. Her mother, a native of France, had preferred her religion to her country. The profession of her father did not extinguish the moderation and philosophy of his temper, and he lived content with a small salary and laborious duty in the obscure lot of minister of Crassy, in the mountains that separate the Pays de Vaud from the county of Burgundy. In the solitude of a sequestered village he bestowed a liberal, and even a learned, education on his only daughter. She surpassed his hopes by her proficiency in the sciences and languages; and in her short visits to some relations at Lausanne, the wit, the beauty, and erudition of Mademoiselle Curchod were the theme of universal applause. The report of such a prodigy awakened my curiosity; I saw and loved. I found her learned without pedantry, lively in conversation, pure in sentiment, and elegant in manners; and the first sudden emotion was fortified by the habits and knowledge of a more familiar acquaintance. She permitted me to make her two or three visits at her father's house. I passed some happy days there, in the mountains of Burgundy, and her parents honourably encouraged the connection.

In a calm retirement the gay vanity of youth no longer fluttered in her bosom; she listened to the voice of truth and passion, and I might presume to hope that I had made some impression on a virtuous heart. At Crassy and Lausanne I indulged my dream of felicity: but on my return to England, I soon discovered that my father would not hear of this strange alliance, and that without his consent I was myself destitute and helpless. After a painful struggle I yielded to my fate: I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son; my wound was insensibly healed by time, absence, and the habits of a new life. My cure was accelerated by a faithful report of the tranquillity and cheerfulness of the lady herself, and my love subsided in friendship and esteem. The minister of Crassy soon afterwards died; his stipend died with him; his daughter retired to Geneva, where, by teaching young ladies, she earned a hard subsistence for herself and her mother; but in her lowest distress she maintained a spotless reputation, and a dignified behaviour. A rich banker of Paris, a citizen of Geneva, had the good fortune and good sense to discover and possess this inestimable treasure; and in the capital of taste

and luxury she resisted the temptations of wealth, as she had sustained the hardships of indigence. The genius of her husband has exalted him to the most conspicuous station in Europe. In every change of prosperity and disgrace he has reclined on the bosom of a faithful friend; and Mademoiselle Curchod is now the wife of M. Necker, the minister, and perhaps the legislator, of the French monarchy.

Memoirs of my Life and Writings (*c.* 1789)

GILBERT WHITE

54. *"The Raven Tree"*

In the centre of this grove there stood an oak, which, though shapely and tall on the whole, bulged out into a large excrescence about the middle of the stem. On this a pair of ravens had fixed their residence for such a series of years, that the oak was distinguished by the title of the Raven Tree. Many were the attempts of the neighbouring youths to get at this eyry: the difficulty whetted their inclinations, and each was ambitious of surmounting the arduous task.

But, when they arrived at the swelling, it jutted out so in their way, and was so far beyond their grasp, that the most daring lads were awed, and acknowledged the undertaking to be too hazardous: so the ravens built on, nest upon nest, in perfect security, till the fatal day arrived in which the wood was to be levelled. It was in the month of February, when these birds usually sit. The saw was applied to the butt,—the wedges were inserted into the opening,—the woods echoed to the heavy blow of the beetle or mall or mallet,—the tree nodded to its fall; but still the dam sat on. At last, when it gave way, the bird was flung from her nest; and though her parental affection deserved a better fate, was whipped down by the twigs, which brought her dead to the ground.

The Natural History of Selbourne (1789), Pt. i., Let. 2

JAMES BOSWELL

55. *Boswell Meets Dr. Johnson*

Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated;

and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I come from." "From Scotland," cried Davies roguishly. "Mr. Johnson (said I), I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to soothe and conciliate him, and not as any humiliating abasement at the expense of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help." This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down I felt myself not a little embarrassed and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: "What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three

shillings." Eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, "O, sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you." "Sir (said he, with a stern look), I have known David Garrick longer than you have done: and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject." Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justness of the animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil. I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And, in truth, had not my ardour been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me for ever from making any further attempts.

The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D. (1791)

MRS. RADCLIFFE

56. *Ludovico the Night before his Disappearance*

He lighted the Count and Henri through the chambers to the outer door; on the landing-place stood a lamp, which one of the affrighted servants had left, and Henri, as he took it up, again bade Ludovico good-night, who, having respectfully returned the wish, closed the door upon them, and fastened it. Then, as he retired to the bed-chamber, he examined the rooms, through which he passed, with more minuteness than he had done before, for he apprehended, that some person might have concealed himself in them, for the purpose of frightening him. No one, however, but himself, was in these chambers, and, leaving open the doors, through which he passed, he came again to the great drawing-room, whose spaciousness and silent gloom somewhat awed him. For a moment he stood, looking back through the long suite of rooms he had quitted, and, as he turned, perceiving a light and

his own figure, reflected in one of the large mirrors, he started. Other objects too were seen obscurely on its dark surface, but he paused not to examine them, and returned hastily into the bed-room; as he surveyed which, he observed the door of the oriel, and opened it. All within was still. On looking round, his eye was arrested by the portrait of the deceased Marchioness, upon which he gazed, for a considerable time, with great attention and some surprise; and then, having examined the closet, he returned into the bed-room, where he kindled a wood fire, the bright blaze of which revived his spirits, which had begun to yield to the gloom and silence of the place, for gusts of wind alone broke at intervals this silence. He now drew a small table and a chair near the fire, took a bottle of wine, and some cold provision out of his basket, and regaled himself. When he had finished his repast, he laid his sword upon the table, and, not feeling disposed to sleep, drew from his pocket the book he had spoken of.—It was a volume of Provençal tales. Having stirred the fire into a brighter blaze, trimmed his lamp, and drawn his chair upon the hearth, he

began to read, and his attention was soon wholly occupied by the scenes, which the page disclosed.

The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794)

EDMUND BURKE

57. *In Reply to the Duke of Bedford*

The Duke of Bedford will stand as long as prescriptive law endures: as long as the great, stable laws of property, common to us with all civilized nations, are kept in their integrity, and without the smallest intermixture of the laws, maxims, principles, or precedents of the grand revolution. They are secure against all changes but one. The whole revolutionary system, institutes, digest, code, novels, text, gloss, comment, are, not only not the same, but they are the very reverse, and the reverse fundamentally, of all the laws, on which civil life has hitherto been upheld in all the governments of the world. The learned professors of the rights of man regard prescription, not as a title to bar all claim, set up against old possession—but they look on pre-

scription as itself a bar against the possessor and proprietor. They hold an immemorial possession to be no more than a long continued, and therefore an aggravated injustice.

Such are *their* ideas; such *their* religion, and such *their* law. But as to *our* country and *our* race, as long as the well-compacted structure of our church and state, the sanctuary, the holy of holies of that ancient law, defended by reverence, defended by power, a fortress at once and a temple, shall stand inviolate on the brow of the British Sion—as long as the British monarchy, not more limited than fenced by the orders of the state, shall, like the proud Keep of Windsor, rising in the majesty of proportion, and girt with the double belt of its kindred and coeval towers, as long as this awful structure shall oversee and guard the subjected land—so long the mounds and dykes of the low, fat, Bedford level will have nothing to fear from all the pick-axes of all the levellers of France. As long as our sovereign lord the king, and his faithful subjects, the lords and commons of this realm,—the triple cord, which no man can break; the solemn, sworn, constitutional frank-pledge of

this nation; the firm guarantees of each other's being, and each other's rights; the joint and several securities, each in its place and order, for every kind and every quality, of property and of dignity:—as long as these endure, so long the Duke of Bedford is safe: and we are all safe together—the high from the blights of envy and the spoliations of rapacity; the low from the iron hand of oppression and the insolent spurn of contempt. Amen! and so be it: and so it will be,

Dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum
Accolet; imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.

A Letter to a Noble Lord (1796)

ROBERT SOUTHEY

58. *Effects of the Death of Nelson*

The death of Nelson was felt in England as something more than a public calamity: men started at the intelligence, and turned pale, as if they had heard of the loss of a dear friend. An object of our admiration and affection, of our pride and of our hopes, was suddenly taken from

us; and it seemed as if we had never, till then, known how deeply we loved and reverenced him. What the country had lost in its great naval hero—the greatest of our own, and of all former times, was scarcely taken into the account of grief. So perfectly, indeed, had he performed his part, that the maritime war, after the battle of Trafalgar, was considered at an end: the fleets of the enemy were not merely defeated, but destroyed: new navies must be built, and a new race of seamen reared for them, before the possibility of their invading our shores could again be contemplated. It was not, therefore, from any selfish reflection upon the magnitude of our loss that we mourned for him: the general sorrow was of a higher character. The people of England grieved that funeral ceremonies, public monuments and posthumous rewards, were all which they could now bestow upon him, whom the king, the legislature, and the nation, would alike have delighted to honour; whom every tongue would have blessed; whose presence in every village through which he might have passed would have wakened the church bells, have given school-boys a holiday, have drawn

children from their sports to gaze upon him, and "old men from the chimney corner," to look upon Nelson ere they died. The victory of Trafalgar was celebrated, indeed, with the usual forms of rejoicing, but they were without joy; for such already was the glory of the British navy, through Nelson's surpassing genius, that it scarcely seemed to receive any addition from the most signal victory that ever was achieved upon the seas: and the destruction of this mighty fleet, by which all the maritime schemes of France were totally frustrated, hardly appeared to add to our security or strength; for, while Nelson was living, to watch the combined squadrons of the enemy, we felt ourselves as secure as now, when they were no longer in existence.

The Life of Nelson (1813)

JANE AUSTEN

59. *The Rev. Mr. Collins and his Patronesses*

"I THINK you said she was a widow, sir? has she any family?"

"She has one only daughter, the heiress of Rosings, and a very extensive property."

"Ah," cried Mrs. Bennet, shaking her head, "then she is better off than many girls. And what sort of young lady is she? Is she handsome?"

"She is a most charming young lady, indeed. Lady Catherine herself says that, in point of true beauty, Miss de Bourgh is far superior to the handsomest of her sex; because there is that in her features which marks the young woman of distinguished birth. She is unfortunately of a sickly constitution, which has prevented her making that progress in many accomplishments which she could not otherwise have failed of, as I am informed by the lady who superintended her education, and who still resides with them. But she is perfectly amiable, and often condescends to drive by my humble abode in her little phaeton and ponies."

"Has she been presented? I do not remember her name among the ladies at court."

"Her indifferent state of health unhappily prevents her being in town; and by that means, as I told Lady Catherine myself one day, has deprived the British Court of its brightest ornament. Her Ladyship seemed pleased with the idea; and

you may imagine that I am happy on every occasion to offer those little delicate compliments which are always acceptable to ladies. I have more than once observed to Lady Catherine, that her charming daughter seemed born to be a duchess; and that the most elevated rank, instead of giving her consequence, would be adorned by her. These are the kind of little things which please her Ladyship, and it is a sort of attention which I conceive myself peculiarly bound to pay."

"You judge very properly," said Mr. Bennet; "and it is happy for you that you possess the talent of flattering with delicacy. May I ask whether these pleasing attentions proceed from the impulse of the moment, or are the result of previous study?"

"They arise chiefly from what is passing at the time; and though I sometimes amuse myself with suggesting and arranging such little elegant compliments as may be adapted to ordinary occasions, I always wish to give them as unstudied an air as possible."

Mr. Bennet's expectations were fully answered. His cousin was as absurd as he had hoped; and

he listened to him with the keenest enjoyment, maintaining at the same time the most resolute composure of countenance, and, except in an occasional glance at Elizabeth, requiring no partner in his pleasure.

Pride and Prejudice (1813), **Ch. xiv**

MARIA EDGEWORTH

60. *Mrs. Hungerford*

The first visit she paid when she came to the country, the first visit she had been known to pay for years, was to her friends the Percys, after they had lost their thousands per annum. So completely was it themselves and not their fortune, which she had always considered, that she never condoled with them, and scarcely seemed to advert to any change in their circumstances. She perceived, to be sure, that she was not at Percy-Hall; she discovered, probably, that she was in a small instead of a large room, the change of prospect from the windows struck her eye, and she remarked, that this part of the country was more beautiful than that to which she had been accustomed.—As to the more or

less show, of dress, or equipage, these things did not merely make no difference in Mrs. Hungerford's estimation of persons, but in fact scarcely made any impression upon her senses or attention. She had been so much accustomed to magnificence upon a large scale, that the different subordinate degrees were lost upon her, and she had seen so many changes of fashion and of fortune, that she attached little importance to these, but, regardless of the drapery of objects, saw at once what was substantial and essential. It might, she thought, be one man's taste to visit her in a barouche and four, with half a dozen servants, and another person's pleasure to come without parade or attendants—this was indifferent to her. It was their conversation, their characters, their merit, she looked to; and many a lord and lady of showy dress and equipage, and vast importance in their own opinions, shrunk into insignificance in the company of Mrs. Hungerford; and, though in the room with her, passed before her eyes without making a sufficient sensation upon her organs to attract her notice, or to change the course of her thoughts.

Patronage (1814), Ch. xiv

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

61. *Advice to Young Authors*

With no other privilege than that of sympathy and sincere good wishes, I would address an affectionate exhortation to the youthful *literati,* grounded on my own experience. It will be but short; for the beginning, middle, and end converge to one charge: *never pursue literature as a trade.* With the exception of one extraordinary man, I have never known an individual, least of all an individual of genius, healthy or happy without a *profession*, that is, some *regular* employment, which does not depend on the will of the moment, and which can be carried on so far *mechanically* that an average *quantum* only of health, spirits, and intellectual exertion are requisite to its faithful discharge. Three hours of leisure, unannoyed by any alien anxiety, and looked forward to with delight as a change and recreation, will suffice to realize in literature a larger product of what is truly genial, than weeks of compulsion. Money, and immediate reputation form only an arbitrary and accidental end of

literary labour. The hope of increasing them by any given exertion will often prove a stimulant to industry; but the necessity of acquiring them will in all works of genius convert the stimulant into a narcotic. Motives by excess reverse their very nature, and instead of exciting, stun and stupefy the mind. For it is one contradistinction of genius from talent, that its predominant end is always comprised in the means; and this is one of the many points, which establish an analogy between genius and virtue. Now though talents may exist without genius, yet as genius cannot exist, certainly not manifest itself, without talents, I would advise every scholar, who feels the genial power working within him, so far to make a division between the two, as that he should devote his talents to the acquirement of competence in some known trade or profession, and his genius to objects of his tranquil and unbiassed choice; while the consciousness of being actuated in both alike by the sincere desire to perform his duty, will alike ennoble both.

Biographia Literaria (1817)

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

62. *The Charms of Childhood*

FRESH air and liberty are all that is necessary to the happiness of children. In that blissful age "when nature's self is new," the bloom of interest and beauty is found alike in every object of perception—in the grass of the meadow, the moss on the rock, and the seaweed on the sand. They find gems and treasures in shells and pebbles; and the gardens of fairyland in the simplest flowers. They have no melancholy associations with autumn or with evening. The falling leaves are their playthings; and the setting sun only tells them that they must go to rest as he does, and that he will light them to their sports in the morning. It is this bloom of novelty, and the pure, unclouded, unvitiated feelings with which it is contemplated, that throw such an unearthly radiance on the scenes of our infancy, however humble in themselves, and give a charm to their recollections which not even Tempe can compensate. It is the force of first impressions. The first meadow in which we

gather cowslips, the first stream on which we sail, the first home in which we awake to the sense of human sympathy, have all a peculiar and exclusive charm, which we shall never find again in richer meadows, mightier rivers, and more magnificent dwellings; nor even in themselves, when we revisit them after the lapse of years, and the sad realities of noon have dissipated the illusions of sunrise.

Melincourt (1817), Ch. xx

SIR WALTER SCOTT

63. *Richard Cœur-de-Lion*

THERE was among the ranks of the Disinherited Knight a champion in black armour, mounted on a black horse, large of size, tall, and to all appearance powerful and strong. The knight, who bore on his shield no device of any kind, had hitherto evinced very little interest in the event of the fight, beating off with seeming ease those knights who attacked him, but neither pursuing his advantages, nor himself assailing any one. In short, he acted the part rather of a spectator than of a

party in the tournament, a circumstance which procured him among the spectators the name of *Le Noir Faineant,* or the Black Sluggard.

At once this knight seemed to throw aside his apathy when he discovered the leader of his party so hard bestead; for, setting spurs to his horse, which was quite fresh, he came to his assistance like a thunderbolt, exclaiming in a voice like a trumpet-call, "*Desdichado,* to the rescue!" It was high time; for, while the Disinherited Knight was pressing upon the Templar, Front-de-Bœuf had got nigh to him with uplifted sword; but ere the blow could descend, the Sable Knight encountered him, and Front-de-Bœuf rolled on the ground, both horse and man. *Le Noir Faineant* then turned his horse upon Athelstane of Coningsburgh; and his own sword having been broken in his encounter with Front-de-Bœuf, he wrenched from the hand of the bulky Saxon the battle-axe which he wielded, and dealt him such a blow upon the crest, that Athelstane also lay senseless on the field. Having achieved this feat, for which he was the more highly applauded that it was totally unexpected from him, the knight seemed to resume the

sluggishness of his character, returning calmly to the northern extremity of the lists, leaving his leader to cope as he best could with Brian de Bois-Guilbert.

Ivanhoe (1819), Ch. xii

CHARLES LAMB

64. *Mrs. Battle on Whist*

"A CLEAR fire, a clean hearth, and the rigour of the game." This was the celebrated *wish* of old Sarah Battle (now with God), who, next to her devotions, loved a good game at whist. She was none of your lukewarm gamesters, your half and half players, who have no objection to take a hand, if you want one to make up a rubber; who affirm that they have no pleasure in winning; that they like to win one game and lose another; that they can while away an hour very agreeably at a card table, but are indifferent whether they play or no; and will desire an adversary, who has slipped a wrong card, to take it up and play another. These insufferable triflers are the curse of a table. One of these flies will spoil a whole

pot. Of such it may be said, that they do not play at cards, but only play at playing at them.

Sarah Battle was none of that breed. She detested them, as I do, from her heart and soul; and would not, save upon a striking emergency, willingly seat herself at the same table with them. She loved a thorough-paced partner, a determined enemy. She took, and gave no concessions. She hated favours. She never made a revoke, nor ever passed it over in her adversary without exacting the utmost forfeiture. She fought a good fight: cut and thrust. She held not her good sword (her cards) "like a dancer." She sat bolt upright; and neither showed you her cards, nor desired to see yours. All people have their blind side—their superstitions; and I have heard her declare, under the rose, that Hearts was her favourite suit.

I never in my life—and I knew Sarah Battle many of the best years of it—saw her take out her snuff-box when it was her turn to play; or snuff a candle in the middle of a game; or ring for a servant, till it was fairly over. She never introduced, or connived at, miscellaneous conversation during its process. As she emphati-

cally observed, cards were cards: and if I ever saw unmingled distaste in her fine last-century countenance, it was at the airs of a young gentleman of a literary turn, who had been with difficulty persuaded to take a hand; and who, in his excess of candour, declared, that he thought there was no harm in unbending the mind now and then, after serious studies, in recreations of that kind! She could not bear to have her noble occupation, to which she wound up her faculties, considered in that light. It was her business, her duty, the thing she came into the world to do, —and she did it. She unbent her mind afterwards—over a book.

London Magazine (Feb. 1821)

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

65. *Of Poetry*

Poetry is indeed something divine. It is at once the centre and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred. It is at the same time the root and blossom of all other

systems of thought; it is that from which all spring, and that which adorns all; and that which, if blighted, denies the fruit and the seed, and withholds from the barren world the nourishment and the succession of the scions of the tree of life. It is the perfect and consummate surface and bloom of all things; it is as the odour and the colour of the rose to the texture of the elements which compose it, as the form and splendour of unfaded beauty to the secrets of anatomy and corruption. What were virtue, love, patriotism, friendship,—what were the scenery of this beautiful universe which we inhabit; what were our consolations on this side of the grave—and what were our aspirations beyond it, if poetry did not ascend to bring light and fire from those eternal regions where the owl-winged faculty of calculation dare not ever soar? Poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say, "I will compose poetry." The greatest poet even cannot say it; for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the colour of a

flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our nature are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure. Could this influence be durable in its original purity and force, it is impossible to predict the greatness of the results; but when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet. I appeal to the greatest poets of the present day, whether it is not an error to assert that the finest passages of poetry are produced by labour and study. The toil and the delay recommended by critics, can be justly interpreted to mean no more than a careful observation of the inspired moments, and an artificial connection of the spaces between their suggestions, by the intertexture of conventional expressions: a necessity only imposed by the limitedness of the poetical faculty itself: for Milton conceived the Paradise Lost as a whole before he executed it in portions. We have his own authority also for the muse having "dictated" to him the "unpremeditated song." And let this be an answer to those who

would allege the fifty-six various readings of the first line of the Orlando Furioso. Compositions so produced are to poetry what mosaic is to painting. The instinct and intuition of the poetical faculty is still more observable in the plastic and pictorial arts: a great statue or picture grows under the power of the artist as a child in the mother's womb; and the very mind which directs the hands in formation, is incapable of accounting to itself for the origin, the gradations, or the media of the process.

A Defence of Poetry (1821)

JOHN GALT

66. *Drawing to an End*

My tasks are all near a close; and in writing this final record of my ministry, the very sound of my pen admonishes me that my life is a burden on the back of flying time, that he will soon be obliged to lay down in his great store-house, the grave. Old age has, indeed, long warned me to prepare for rest, and the darkened windows of my sight shew that the night is coming on, while

deafness, like a door fast barred, has shut out all the pleasant sounds of this world, and enclosed me, as it were, in a prison, even from the voices of my friends.

I have lived longer than the common lot of man, and I have seen, in my time, many mutations and turnings, and ups and downs, notwithstanding the great spread that has been in our national prosperity. I have beheld them that were flourishing like the green bay trees, made desolate, and their branches scattered. But, in my own estate, I have had a large and liberal experience of goodness.

At the beginning of my ministry I was reviled and rejected, but my honest endeavours to prove a faithful shepherd, were blessed from on high, and rewarded with the affection of my flock. Perhaps, in the vanity of doting old age, I thought in this there was a merit due to myself, which made the Lord to send the chastisement of the Canaille schism among my people, for I was then wroth without judgment, and by my heat hastened into an open division the flaw that a more considerate manner might have healed. But I confess my fault, and submit my cheek to the

smiter; and I now see that the finger of Wisdom was in that probation, and it was far better that the weavers meddled with the things of God, which they could not change, than with those of the king, which they could only harm. In that matter, however, I was like our gracious monarch in the American war; for though I thereby lost the pastoral allegiance of a portion of my people, in like manner as he did of his American subjects; yet, after the separation, I was enabled so to deport myself, that they shewed me many voluntary testimonies of affectionate respect, and which it would be a vain glory in me to rehearse here. One thing I must record, because it is as much to their honour as it is to mine.

When it was known that I was to preach my last sermon, every one of those who had been my hearers, and who had seceded to the Canaille meeting, made it a point that day to be in the parish kirk, and to stand in the crowd, that made a lane of reverence for me to pass from the kirk-door to the back-yett of the Manse. And shortly after a deputation of all their brethren, with their minister at their head, came to me one morning, and presented to me a server of silver, in token, as

they were pleased to say, of their esteem for my blameless life, and the charity that I had practised towards the poor of all sects in the neighbourhood; which is set forth in a well-penned inscription, written by a weaver lad that works for his daily bread. Such a thing would have been a prodigy at the beginning of my ministry, but the progress of book learning and education has been wonderful since, and with it has come a spirit of greater liberality than the world knew before, bringing men of adverse principles and doctrines, into a more humane communion with each other, shewing, that it's by the mollifying influence of knowledge, the time will come to pass, when the tiger of papistry shall lie down with the lamb of reformation, and the vultures of prelacy be as harmless as the presbyterian doves; when the independent, the anabaptist, and every other order and denomination of Christians, not forgetting even these poor little wrens of the Lord, the burghers and anti-burghers, who will pick from the hand of patronage, and dread no snare.

Annals of the Parish (1821), Ch. li

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

67. *A Dream of Easter Sunday*

I THOUGHT that it was a Sunday morning in May; that it was Easter Sunday, and as yet very early in the morning. I was standing, as it seemed to me, at the door of my own cottage. Right before me lay the very scene which could really be commanded from that situation, but exalted, as was usual, and solemnised by the power of dreams. There were the same mountains, and the same lovely valley at their feet; but the mountains were raised to more than Alpine height, and there was interspace far larger between them of meadows and forest lawns; the hedges were rich with white roses; and no living creature was to be seen, excepting that in the green churchyard there were cattle tranquilly reposing upon the verdant graves, and particularly round about the grave of a child whom I had tenderly loved, just as I had really beheld them, a little before sunrise, in the same summer when that child died. I gazed upon the well-known scene, and I said aloud (as I thought) to myself,

"It yet wants much of sunrise; and it is Easter Sunday; and that is the day on which they celebrate the first-fruits of Resurrection. I will walk abroad; old griefs shall be forgotten to-day: for the air is cool and still, and the hills are high, and stretch away to heaven; and the forest glades are as quiet as the churchyard; and with the dew I can wash the fever from my forehead; and then I shall be unhappy no longer."

Confessions of an English Opium-Eater (1821)

LORD BYRON

68. *To his Wife*

I SUPPOSE that this note will reach you somewhere about Ada's birthday—the 10th of December, I believe. She will then be six, so that in about twelve more I shall have some chance of meeting her;—perhaps sooner, if I am obliged to go to England by business or otherwise. Recollect, however, one thing, either in distance or nearness;—every day which keeps us asunder should, after so long a period, rather soften our mutual feelings, which must always

have one rallying-point as long as our child exists, which I presume we both hope will be long after either of her parents.

The time which has elapsed since the separation has been considerably more than the whole brief period of our union, and the not much longer one of our prior acquaintance. We both made a bitter mistake; but now it is over and irrevocably so. For, at thirty-three on my part, and a few years less on yours, though it is no very extended period of life, still it is one when the habits and thought are generally so formed as to admit of no modification; and as we could not agree when younger, we should with difficulty do so now.

I say all this, because I own to you, that, notwithstanding everything, I considered our reunion as not impossible for more than a year after the separation;—but then I gave up the hope entirely and for ever. But this very impossibility of reunion seems to me at least a reason why, on all the few points of discussion which can arise between us, we should preserve the courtesies of life, and as much of its kindness as people who have never to meet may pre-

serve perhaps more easily than nearer connections. For my own part, I am violent, but not malignant; for only fresh provocations can awaken my resentments. To you, who are colder and more concentrated, I would just hint, that you may sometimes mistake the depth of a cold anger for dignity, and a worse feeling for duty. I assure you that I bear you *now* (whatever I may have done) no resentment whatever. Remember, that *if you have injured me* in aught, this forgiveness is something; and that, if I have *injured you,* it is something more still, if it be true, as the moralists say, that the most offending are the least forgiving.

Whether the offence has been solely on my side, or reciprocal, or on yours chiefly, I have ceased to reflect upon any but two things,—viz., that you are the mother of my child, and that we shall never meet again. I think if you also consider the two corresponding points with reference to myself, it will be better for all three.

Letters (1821)

WILLIAM HAZLITT

69. *On the Fear of Death*

PERHAPS the best cure for the fear of death is to reflect that life has a beginning as well as an end. There was a time when we were not: this gives us no concern—why, then, should it trouble us that a time will come when we shall cease to be? I have no wish to have been alive a hundred years ago, or in the reign of Queen Anne: why should I regret and lay it so much to heart that I shall not be alive a hundred years hence, in the reign of I cannot tell whom?

When Bickerstaff wrote his Essays I knew nothing of the subjects of them; nay, much later, and but the other day, as it were, in the beginning of the reign of George III., when Goldsmith, Johnson, Burke, used to meet at the Globe, when Garrick was in his glory, and Reynolds was over head and ears with his portraits, and Sterne brought out the volumes of *Tristram Shandy* year by year, it was without consulting me: I had not the slightest intimation of what

was going on: the debates in the House of Commons on the American War, or the firing at Bunker's Hill, disturbed not me: yet I thought this no evil—I neither ate, drank, nor was merry, yet I did not complain: I had not then looked out into this breathing world, yet I was well; and the world did quite as well without me as I did without it! Why, then, should I make all this outcry about parting with it, and being no worse off than I was before? There is nothing in the recollection that at a certain time we were not come into the world that "the gorge rises at"—why should we revolt at the idea that we must one day go out of it? To die is only to be as we were before we were born; yet no one feels any remorse, or regret, or repugnance, in contemplating this last idea. It is rather a relief and disburthening of the mind: it seems to have been holiday-time with us then: we were not called to appear upon the stage of life, to wear robes or tatters, to laugh or cry, be hooted or applauded; we had lain *perdus* all this while, snug, out of harm's way; and had slept out our thousands of centuries without wanting to be waked up; at peace and free from care, in a long nonage, in a

sleep deeper and calmer than that of infancy, wrapped in the softest and finest dust. And the worst that we dread is, after a short, fretful, feverish being, after vain hopes and idle fears, to sink to final repose again, and forget the troubled dream of life! . . . Ye armed men, knights templars, that sleep in the stone aisles of that old Temple church, where all is silent above, and where a deeper silence reigns below (not broken by the pealing organ), are ye not contented where ye lie? Or would you come out of your long homes to go to the Holy War? Or do ye complain that pain no longer visits you, that sickness has done its worst, that you have paid the last debt to nature, that you hear no more of the thickening phalanx of the foe, or your lady's waning love; and that while this ball of earth rolls its eternal round, no sound shall ever pierce through to disturb your lasting repose, fixed as the marble over your tombs, breathless as the grave that holds you!

Table Talk (1822)

SUSAN EDMONSTONE FERRIER

70. *Character of Lord Rossville*

Lord Rossville's character was one of those, whose traits, though minute, are as strongly marked as though they had been cast in a large mould. But, as not even the powers of the microscope can impart strength and beauty to the object it magnifies, so no biographer could have exaggerated into virtues the petty foibles of his mind. Yet the predominating qualities were such as often cast a false glory around their possessor—for the love of power and the desire of human applause were the engrossing principles of his soul. In strong capacious minds, and in great situations, these incentives often produce brilliant results; but in a weak contracted mind, moving in the narrow sphere of domestic life, they could only circulate through the thousand little channels that tend to increase or impair domestic happiness. As he was not addicted to any particular vice, he considered himself as a man of perfect virtue; and having been, in some respects, very prosperous in his fortune, he

was thoroughly satisfied that he was a person of the most consummate wisdom. With these ideas of himself, it is not surprising that he should have deemed it his bounden duty to direct and manage every man, woman, child, or animal, who came within his sphere, and that too in the most tedious and tormenting manner. Perhaps the most teasing point in his character was his ambition—the fatal ambition of thousands—to be thought an eloquent and impressive speaker; for this purpose, he always used ten times as many words as were necessary to express his meaning, and those too of the longest and strongest description. Another of his tormenting peculiarities was his desire of explaining everything, by which he always perplexed and mystified the simplest subject. Yet he had his good points, for he wished to see those around him happy, provided he was the dispenser of their happiness, and that they were happy precisely in the manner and degree he thought proper. In short Lord Rossville was a sort of petty benevolent tyrant; and any attempt to enlarge his soul, or open his understanding, would have been in vain. Indeed his mind was already full, as full

as it could hold, of little thoughts, little plans, little notions, little prejudices, little whims, and nothing short of regeneration could have made him otherwise.

The Inheritance (1824), Ch. iii

HENRY HALLAM

71. *The Revolution of 1688*

In the revolution of 1688 there was an unusual combination of favouring circumstances, and some of the most important, such as the king's sudden flight, not within prior calculation, which render it no precedent for other times and occasions in point of expediency, whatever it may be in point of justice. Resistance to tyranny by overt rebellion incurs not only the risks of failure, but those of national impoverishment and confusion, of vindictive retaliation, and such aggressions, perhaps inevitable, on private right and liberty as render the name of revolution and its adherents odious. Those, on the other hand, who call in a powerful neighbour to protect them from domestic oppression, may too often expect

to realise the horse of the fable, and endure a subjection more severe, permanent and ignominious, than what they shake off. But the revolution effected by William III. united the independent character of a national act with the regularity and the coercion of anarchy which belong to a military invasion. The United Provinces were not such a foreign potentate as could put in jeopardy the independence of England; nor could his army have maintained itself against the inclinations of the kingdom, though it was sufficient to repress any turbulence that would naturally attend so extraordinary a crisis. Nothing was done by the multitude; no new men, soldiers or demagogues, had their talents brought forward by this rapid and pacific revolution; it cost no blood, it violated no right, it was hardly to be traced in the course of justice; the formal and exterior character of the monarchy remained nearly the same in so complete a regeneration of its spirit. Few nations can hope to ascend up to the sphere of a just and honourable liberty, especially when long use has made the track of obedience familiar, and they have learned to move as it were only by the clank of the chain,

with so little toil and hardship. We reason too exclusively from this peculiar instance of 1688, when we hail the fearful struggles of other revolutions with a sanguine and confident sympathy. Nor is the only error upon this side. For, as if the inveterate and cankerous ills of a commonwealth could be extirpated with no loss and suffering, we are often prone to abandon the popular cause in agitated nations with as much fickleness as we embraced it, when we find that intemperance, irregularity, and confusion, from which great revolutions are very seldom exempt. These are indeed so much their usual attendants, the re-action of a self-deceived multitude is so probable a consequence, the general prospect of success in most cases so precarious, that wise and good men are more likely to hesitate too long, than to rush forward too eagerly. Yet, "whatever be the cost of this noble liberty, we must be content to pay it to Heaven."

The Constitutional History of England (1827), Ch. xiv

72. *Lord Byron in 1823*

WHILE thus at this period, more remarkably than at any other during his life, the unparalleled versatility of his genius was unfolding itself, those quick, cameleon-like changes of which his character, too, was capable were, during the same time, most vividly, and in strongest contrast, drawn out. To the world, and more especially to England,—the scene at once of his glories and his wrongs,—he presented himself in no other aspect than that of a stern, haughty misanthrope, self-banished from the fellowship of men and, most of all, from that of Englishmen. The more genial and beautiful inspirations of his muse were, in this point of view, looked upon but as lucid intervals between the paroxysms of an inherent malignancy of nature; and even the laughing effusions of his wit and humour got credit for no other aim than that which Swift boasted of as the end of all his own labours. "to vex the world rather than divert it."

How totally all this differed from the Byron

of the social hour, they who lived in familiar intercourse with him may be safely left to tell. The sort of ferine reputation which he had acquired for himself abroad prevented numbers, of course, of his countrymen, whom he would have most cordially welcomed, from seeking his acquaintance. But, as it was, no English gentleman ever approached him, with the common forms of introduction, that did not come away at once surprised and charmed by the kind courtesy and facility of his manners, the unpretending play of his conversation, and, on a nearer intercourse, the frank, youthful spirits, to the flow of which he gave way with such a zest, as even to deceive some of those who best knew him into the impression, that gaiety was after all the true bent of his disposition.

To these contrasts which he presented, as viewed publicly and privately, is to be added also the fact, that, while braving the world's ban so boldly, and asserting man's right to think for himself with a freedom and even daringness unequalled, the original shyness of his nature never ceased to hang about him, and while at a distance he was regarded as a sort of autocrat in

intellect, revelling in all the confidence of his own great powers, a somewhat nearer observation enabled a common acquaintance at Venice to detect, under all this, traces of that self-distrust and bashfulness which had marked him as a boy, and which never entirely forsook him through the whole of his career.

Life of Lord Byron (1830), Vol. ii

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD

73. *A Domestic Episode*

Ah! here is a shriller din mingling with the small artillery—a shriller and more continuous. We are not yet arrived within sight of Master Weston's cottage, snugly hidden behind a clump of elms; but we are in full hearing of Dame Weston's tongue, raised, as usual, to scolding pitch. The Westons are new arrivals in our neighbourhood, and the first thing heard of them was a complaint from the wife to our magistrate of her husband's beating her; it was a regular charge of assault—an information in full form. A most piteous case did Dame Weston make of

it, softening her voice for the nonce into a shrill, tremulous whine, and exciting the mingled pity and anger—pity towards herself, anger towards her husband—of the whole female world, pitiful and indignant as the female world is wont to be on such occasions. Every woman in the parish railed at Master Weston; and poor Master Weston was summoned to attend the bench on the ensuing Saturday, and answer the charge; and such was the clamour abroad and at home, that the unlucky culprit, terrified at the sound of a warrant and a constable, ran away, and was not heard of for a fortnight.

At the end of that time he was discovered, and brought to the bench; and Dame Weston again told her story, and, as before, on the full cry. She had no witnesses, and the bruises of which she had made complaint had disappeared, and there were no women present to make common cause with the sex. Still, however, the general feeling was against Master Weston; and it would have gone hard with him when he was called in, if a most unexpected witness had not risen up in his favour. His wife had brought in her arms a little girl about eighteen months old, partly,

perhaps, to move compassion in her favour; for a woman with a child in her arms is always an object that excites kind feelings. The little girl had looked shy and frightened, and had been as quiet as a lamb during her mother's examination; but she no sooner saw her father, from whom she had been a fortnight separated, than she clapped her hands, and laughed, and cried, "Daddy! daddy!" and sprang into his arms, and hung round his neck, and covered him with kisses—again shouting, "Daddy, come home! daddy! daddy!"—and finally nestled her little head in his bosom, with a fulness of contentment, an assurance of tenderness and protection, such as no wife-beating tyrant ever did inspire, or ever could inspire, since the days of King Solomon. Our magistrates acted in the very spirit of the Jewish monarch: they accepted the evidence of nature, and dismissed the complaint. And subsequent events have fully justified their decision; Mistress Weston proving not only renowned for the feminine accomplishment of scolding (tongue-banging, it is called in our parts, a compound word which deserves to be Greek), but is actually herself addicted to ad-

ministering the conjugal discipline, the infliction of which she was pleased to impute to her luckless husband.

Our Village (1st Coll. Edit., 1830)

THOMAS CARLYLE

74. *The Fall of the Bastille*

WHAT shall De Launay do? One thing only De Launay could have done: what he said he would do. Fancy him sitting, from the first, with lighted taper, within arm's length of the Powder-Magazine; motionless, like old Roman Senator, or Bronze Lamp-holder; coldly apprising Thuriot, and all men, by a slight motion of his eye, what his resolution was:—Harmless he sat there, while unharmed; but the King's Fortress, meanwhile, could, might, would, or should in no wise be surrendered, save to the King's Messenger: one old man's life is worthless, so it be lost with honour; but think, ye brawling *canaille,* how will it be when a whole Bastille springs skyward!—In such statuesque, taper-holding attitude, one fancies De Launay might have left

Thuriot, the red Clerks of the Basoche, Curé of Saint-Stephen and all the tagrag-and-bobtail of the world, to work their will.

And yet, withal, he could not do it. Hast thou considered how each man's heart is so tremulously responsive to the hearts of all men; hast thou noted how omnipotent is the very sound of many men? How their shriek of indignation palsies the strong soul; their howl of contumely withers with unfelt pangs? The Ritter Gluck confessed that the ground-tone of the noblest passage, in one of his noblest Operas, was the voice of the Populace he had heard at Vienna, crying to their Kaiser: Bread! Bread! Great is the combined voice of men; the utterance of their *instincts,* which are truer than their *thoughts:* it is the greatest a man encounters, among the sounds and shadows which make up this World of Time. He who can resist that, has his footing somewhere *beyond* Time. De Launay could not do it. Distracted, he hovers between two; hopes in the middle of despair; surrenders not his Fortress; declares that he will blow it up, seizes torches to blow it up, and does not blow it. Unhappy old De Launay, it is the death-

agony of thy Bastille and thee! Jail, Jailoring and Jailor, all three, such as they may have been, must finish.

For four hours now has the World-Bedlam roared: call it the World-Chimæra, blowing fire! The poor Invalides have sunk under their battlements, or rise only with reversed muskets: they have made a white flag of napkins; go beating the *chamade,* or seeming to beat, for one can hear nothing. The very Swiss at the Portcullis look weary of firing; disheartened in the fire-deluge: a porthole at the drawbridge is opened, as by one that would speak. See Huissier Maillard, the shifty man! On his plank, swinging over the abyss of that stone Ditch; plank resting on parapet, balanced by weight of Patriots,—he hovers perilous: such a Dove towards such an Ark! Deftly, thou shifty Usher; one man already fell; and lies smashed, far down there, against the masonry! Usher Maillard falls not: deftly, unerring he walks, with outspread palm. The Swiss holds a paper through his porthole; the shifty Usher snatches it, and returns. Terms of surrender: Pardon, immunity to all! Are they accepted?—"*Foi d'officier,* On the word of

an officer," answers half-pay Hulin,—or half-pay Elie, for men do not agree on it,—"they are!" Sinks the drawbridge,—Usher Maillard bolting it when down; rushes-in the living deluge: the Bastille is fallen! *Victoire! La Bastille est prise!*

The French Revolution (1837), Bk. v., Ch. vi

JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART

75. *Sunday Evenings at Sir Walter Scott's*

THE sound of music—(even, I suspect, of any sacred music but psalm-singing)—would be considered indecorous in the streets of Edinburgh on a Sunday night; so, upon the occasions I am speaking of, the harp was silent, and *Otterburne* and *The Bonny House of Airlie* must needs be dispensed with. To make amends, after tea in the drawing-room, Scott usually read some favourite author, for the amusement of his little circle; or Erskine, Ballantyne, or Terry did so, at his request. He himself read aloud high poetry with far greater simplicity, depth, and effect, than any other man I ever heard; and, in

Macbeth or Julius Cæsar, or the like, I doubt if Kemble could have been more impressive. Yet the changes of intonation were so gently managed, that he contrived to set the different interlocutors clearly before us, without the least approach to theatrical artifice. Not so the others I have mentioned: they all read cleverly and agreeably, but with the decided trickery of stage recitation. To them he usually gave the book when it was a comedy, or, indeed, any other drama than Shakespeare's or Joanna Baillie's. Dryden's Fables, Johnson's two Satires, and certain detached scenes of Beaumont and Fletcher, especially that in the *Lover's Progress,* where the ghost of the musical innkeeper makes his appearance, were frequently selected. Of the poets, his contemporaries, however, there was not one that did not come in for his part. In Wordsworth, his pet pieces were, I think, the *Song for Brougham Castle,* the *Laodamia,* and some of the early sonnets:—in Southey, *Queen Orraca, Fernando Ramirez,* the *Lines on the Holly Tree* —and, of his larger poems, the *Thalaba.* Crabbe was perhaps, next to Shakespeare, the standing resource; but in those days Byron was pouring

out his spirit fresh and full; and, if a new piece from his hand had appeared, it was sure to be read by Scott the Sunday evening afterwards, and that with such delighted emphasis, as showed how completely the elder bard had kept all his enthusiasm for poetry at the pitch of youth, all his admiration of genius free, pure, and unstained by the least drop of literary jealousy. Rare and beautiful example of a happily constituted and virtuously disciplined mind and character!

Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart. (1837), Vol. iv., Ch. v

CHARLES DICKENS

76. *Mr. Jingle and Job Trotter take Leave*

"MR. NUPKINS," said the elder lady, "this is not a fit conversation for the servants to overhear. Let these wretches be removed."

"Certainly, my dear," said Mr. Nupkins. "Muzzle!"

"Your worship."

"Open the front door."

"Yes, your worship."

"Leave the house!" said Mr. Nupkins, waving his hand emphatically.

Jingle smiled, and moved towards the door.

"Stay!" said Mr. Pickwick.

Jingle stopped.

"I might," said Mr. Pickwick, "have taken a much greater revenge for the treatment I have experienced at your hands, and that of your hypocritical friend there."

Here Job Trotter bowed with great politeness, and laid his hand upon his heart.

"I say," said Mr. Pickwick, growing gradually angry, "that I might have taken a greater revenge, but I content myself with exposing you, which I consider a duty I owe to society. This is a leniency, sir, which I hope you will remember."

When Mr. Pickwick arrived at this point, Job Trotter, with facetious gravity, applied his hand to his ear, as if desirous not to lose a syllable he uttered.

"And I have only to add, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, now thoroughly angry, "that I consider you a rascal, and a—a ruffian—and—and worse than any man I ever saw, or heard of, except

that pious and sanctified vagabond in the mulberry livery."

"Ha! ha!" said Jingle, "good fellow, Pickwick—fine heart—stout old boy—but must *not* be passionate—bad thing, very—bye, bye—see you again some day—keep up your spirits—now, Job—trot!"

With these words, Mr. Jingle stuck on his hat in the old fashion, and strode out of the room. Job Trotter paused, looked round, smiled, and then with a bow of mock solemnity to Mr. Pickwick, and a wink to Mr. Weller, the audacious slyness of which baffles all description, followed the footsteps of his hopeful master.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, as Mr. Weller was following.

"Sir."

"Stay here."

Mr. Weller seemed uncertain.

"Stay here," repeated Mr. Pickwick.

"Mayn't I polish that 'ere Job off, in the front garden?" said Mr. Weller.

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Mayn't I kick him out o' the gate, sir?" said Mr. Weller.

"Not on any account," replied his master.

For the first time since his engagement, Mr. Weller looked, for a moment, discontented and unhappy. But his countenance immediately cleared up; for the wily Mr. Muzzle, by concealing himself behind the street door, and rushing violently out, at the right instant, contrived with great dexterity to overturn both Mr. Jingle and his attendant, down the flight of steps, into the American aloe tubs that stood beneath.

The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club (1837), Ch. xxv

JOHN RUSKIN

77. *A Plea for Living Artists*

And if, in the application of these principles, in spite of my endeavour to render it impartial, the feeling and fondness which I have for some works of modern art escape me sometimes where it should not, let it be pardoned as little more than a fair counterbalance to that peculiar veneration with which the work of the old master, associated as it has ever been in our ears with the expression of whatever is great or perfect,

must be usually regarded by the reader. I do not say that this veneration is wrong, nor that we should be less attentive to the repeated words of time: but let us not forget that if honour be for the dead, gratitude can only be for the living. He who has once stood beside the grave, to look back upon the companionship which has been for ever closed, feeling how impotent *there* are the wild love or the keen sorrow, to give one instant's pleasure to the pulseless heart, or atone in the lowest measure to the departed spirit for the hour of unkindness, will scarcely for the future incur that debt to the heart, which can only be discharged to the dust. But the lesson which men receive as individuals, they do not learn as nations. Again and again they have seen their noblest descend into the grave, and have thought it enough to garland the tomb-stone when they had not crowned the brow, and to pay the honour to the ashes which they had denied to the spirit. Let it not displease them that they are bidden, amidst the tumult and the dazzle of their busy life, to listen for the few voices, and watch for the few lamps, which God has toned and lighted to charm and to guide

them, that they may not learn their sweetness by their silence, nor their light by their decay.

Modern Painters (1843), Ch. i

ALEXANDER WILLIAM KINGLAKE

78. *An Englishman in the Desert*

I CAN understand the sort of amazement of the Orientals at the scantiness of the retinue with which an Englishman passes the Desert, for I was somewhat struck myself when I saw one of my countrymen making his way across the wilderness in this simple style. At first there was a mere moving speck in the horizon. My party, of course, became all alive with excitement, and there were many surmises. Soon it appeared that three laden camels were approaching, and that two of them carried riders. In a little while we saw that one of the riders wore the European dress, and at last the travellers were pronounced to be an English gentleman and his servant. By their side there were a couple, I think, of Arabs on foot, and this was the whole party.

You—you love sailing—in returning from a cruise to the English coast, you see often enough a fisherman's humble boat far away from all shores, with an ugly black sky above, and an angry sea beneath; you watch the grisly old man at the helm carrying his craft with strange skill through the turmoil of waters, and the boy, supple-limbed, yet weather-worn already, and with steady eyes that look through the blast; you see him understanding commandments from the jerk of his father's white eyebrow—now belaying, and now letting go—now scrunching himself down into mere ballast, or bailing out Death with a pipkin. Stale enough is the sight, and yet when I see it I always stare anew, and with a kind of Titanic exultation, because that a poor boat, with the brain of a man and the hands of a boy on board, can match herself so bravely against black Heaven and Ocean. Well, so when you have travelled for days and days over an Eastern Desert without meeting the likeness of a human being, and then at last see an English shooting-jacket, and his servant come listlessly slouching along from out the forward horizon, you stare at the wide unpro-

portion between this slender company and the boundless plains of sand through which they are keeping their way.

Eothen (1844), Ch. xvii

CHARLOTTE BRONTË

79. *Jane Eyre parts from her Cousins*

Mr. Rochester had given me but one week's leave of absence: yet a month elapsed before I quitted Gateshead. I wished to leave immediately after the funeral; but Georgiana entreated me to stay till she could get off to London: whither she was now at last invited by her uncle, Mr. Gibson; who had come down to direct his sister's interment, and settle the family affairs. Georgiana said she dreaded being left alone with Eliza; from her she got neither sympathy in her dejection, support in her tears, nor aid in her preparations; so I bore with her feeble-minded quailings, and selfish lamentations, as well as I could, and did my best in sewing for her and packing her dresses. It is true, that while I worked, she would idle; and I thought to myself, "If you and I were destined to live always

together, cousin, we would commence matters on a different footing. I should not settle tamely down into being the forbearing party; I should assign you your share of labour, and compel you to accomplish it, or else it should be left undone: I should insist, also, on your keeping some of those drawling, half-insincere complaints hushed in your own breast. It is only because our connection happens to be very transitory, and comes at a peculiarly mournful season, that I consent thus to render it so patient and compliant on my part."

At last I saw Georgiana off; but now it was Eliza's turn to request me to stay another week. Her plans required all her time and attention, she said: she was about to depart for some unknown bourne; and all day long she stayed in her own room, her door bolted within, filling trunks, emptying drawers, burning papers, and holding no communication with any one. She wished me to look after the house, to see callers, and answer notes of condolence.

One morning she told me I was at liberty. "And," she added, "I am obliged to you for your valuable services and discreet conduct!

There is some difference between living with such a one as you, and with Georgiana: you perform your own part in life, and burden no one. To-morrow," she continued, "I set out for the Continent. I shall take up my abode in a religious house, near Lisle—a nunnery you would call it: there I shall be quiet and unmolested. I shall devote myself for a time to the examination of the Roman Catholic dogmas, and to a careful study of the workings of their system; if I find it to be, as I half suspect it is, the one best calculated to ensure the doing of all things decently and in order, I shall embrace the tenets of Rome and probably take the veil."

I neither expressed surprise at this resolution nor attempted to dissuade her from it. "The vocation will fit you to a hair," I thought: "much good may it do you!"

When we parted, she said: "Good-bye, cousin Jane Eyre; I wish you well: you have some sense."

I then returned: "You are not without sense, cousin Eliza; but what you have, I suppose in another year will be walled up alive in a French

convent. However, it is not my business, and so it suits you—I don't much care."

"You are in the right," said she: and with these words we each went our separate way. As I shall not have occasion to refer either to her or her sister again, I may as well mention here, that Georgiana made an advantageous match with a wealthy worn-out man of fashion; and that Eliza actually took the veil, and is at this day superior of the convent where she passed the period of her novitiate: and which she endowed with her fortune.

Jane Eyre (1847), Vol. ii., Ch. vii

EMILY JANE BRONTË

80. *The End of the Story*

"THEY are going to the Grange, then?" I said.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Dean, "as soon as they are married, and that will be on New Year's day."

"And who will live here then?"

"Why, Joseph will take care of the house, and perhaps a lad to keep him company. They will

live in the kitchen, and the rest will be shut up."

"For the use of such ghosts as choose to inhabit it," I observed.

"No, Mr. Lockwood," said Nelly, shaking her head. "I believe the dead are at peace, but it is not right to speak of them with levity."

At that moment the garden gate swung to; the ramblers were returning.

"*They* are afraid of nothing," I grumbled, watching their approach through the window. "Together, they would brave Satan and all his legions."

As they stepped on to the door-stones, and halted to take a last look at the moon—or, more correctly, at each other by her light—I felt irresistibly impelled to escape them again; and, pressing a remembrance into the hand of Mrs. Dean, and disregarding her expostulations at my rudeness, I vanished through the kitchen as they opened the house-door: and so should have confirmed Joseph in his opinion of his fellow-servants' gay indiscretions, had he not fortunately recognised me for a respectable character by the sweet ring of a sovereign at his feet.

My walk home was lengthened by a diversion

in the direction of the kirk. When beneath its walls I perceived decay had made progress, even in seven months—many a window showed black gaps deprived of glass; and slates jutted off, here and there, beyond the right line of the roof, to be gradually worked off in coming autumn storms.

I sought, and soon discovered, the three head-stones on the slope next the moor—the middle one grey, and half buried in heath; Edgar Lipton's only harmonised by the turf and moss creeping up its foot; Heathcliff's still bare.

I lingered around them under that benign sky: watched the moths fluttering among the heath and harebells, listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass, and wondered how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth.

Wuthering Heights (1847), **Ch. xxxiv**

LORD MACAULAY

81. *St. Peter's Chapel in the Tower*

In the meantime many handkerchiefs were dipped in the Duke's blood; for, by a large part

of the multitude he was regarded as a martyr who had died for the Protestant religion. The head and body were placed in a coffin covered with black velvet, and were laid privately under the communion table of St. Peter's Chapel in the Tower. Within four years the pavement of that chancel was again disturbed, and hard by the remains of Monmouth were laid the remains of Jeffreys. In truth there is no sadder spot on the earth than that little cemetery. Death is there associated, not, as in Westminster Abbey and Saint Paul's, with genius and virtue, with public veneration and imperishable renown; not, as in our humblest churches and churchyards, with everything that is most endearing in social and domestic charities; but with whatever is darkest in human nature and in human destiny, with the savage triumph of implacable enemies, with the inconstancy, the ingratitude, the cowardice of friends, with all the miseries of fallen greatness and of blighted fame. Thither have been carried, through successive ages, by the rude hands of gaolers, without one mourner following, the bleeding relics of men who had been the captains of armies, the leaders of parties,

the oracles of senates, and the ornaments of courts. Thither was borne, before the window where Jane Grey was praying, the mangled corpse of Guilford Dudley. Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, and Protector of the realm, reposes there by the brother whom he murdered. There has mouldered away the headless trunk of John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester and Cardinal of Saint Vitalis, a man worthy to have lived in a better age, and to have died in a better cause. There are laid John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, Lord High Admiral, and Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, Lord High Treasurer. There, too, is another Essex, on whom nature and fortune had lavished all their bounties in vain, and whom valour, grace, genius, royal favour, popular applause, conducted to an early and ignominious doom. Not far off sleep two chiefs of the great house of Howard, Thomas, fourth Duke of Norfolk, and Philip, eleventh Earl of Arundel. Here and there, among the thick graves of unquiet and aspiring statesmen, lie more delicate sufferers; Margaret of Salisbury, the last of the proud name of Plantagenet, and those two fair Queens who perished by the

jealous rage of Henry. Such was the dust with which the dust of Monmouth mingled.

History of England (1848), Ch. v

LORD LYTTON

82. *How a Child's Name was chosen*

"My love," said my mother, the night before this Hegira, looking up from her work—"my love, there is one thing you have quite forgot to settle—I beg pardon for disturbing you, but it is important!—baby's name: shan't we call him Augustine?"

"Augustine," said my father dreamily; "why, that name's mine."

"And you would like your boy's to be the same?"

"No," said my father, rousing himself. "Nobody would know which was which. I should catch myself learning the Latin accidence or playing at marbles. I should never know my own identity, and Mrs. Primmins would be giving me pap."

My mother smiled; and putting her hand,

which was a very pretty one, on my father's shoulder, and looking at him tenderly, she said, "There's no fear of mistaking you for any other, even your son, dearest. Still, if you prefer another name, what shall it be?"

"Samuel," said my father, "Dr. Parr's name is Samuel."

"La, my love! Samuel is the ugliest name"—

My father did not hear the exclamation, he was again deep in his books; presently he started up. "Barnes says Homer is Solomon. Read Omeros backwards, in the Hebrew manner"—

"Yes, my love," interrupted my mother. "But baby's Christian name?"

"Omeros—Soremo—Solemo—Solomo!"

"Solomo! shocking!" said my mother.

"Shocking indeed!" echoed my father; "an outrage to common sense." Then, after glancing again over his books, he broke out musingly—"But, after all, it is nonsense to suppose that Homer was not settled till *his* time."

"Whose?" asked my mother mechanically.

My father lifted up his finger.

My mother continued, after a short pause,

"Arthur is a pretty name. Then there's William —Henry—Charles—Robert. What shall it be, love?"

"Pisistratus?" said my father (who had hung fire till then), in a tone of contempt—"Pisistratus indeed!"

"Pisistratus! a very fine name," said my mother joyfully—"Pisistratus Caxton. Thank you, my love; Pisistratus it shall be."

"Do you contradict me? Do you side with Wolf and Heyne, and that pragmatical fellow, Vico? Do you mean to say that the Rhapsodists"—

"No indeed," interrupted my mother. "My dear, you frighten me."

My father sighed, and threw himself back in his chair. My mother took courage and resumed.

"Pisistratus is a long name too! Still, one could call him Sisty."

"Siste, Viator," muttered my father; "that's trite!"

"No, Sisty by itself—short. Thank you, my dear."

Four days afterwards, on his return from the

book sale, to my father's inexpressible bewilderment, he was informed that "Pisistratus was growing the very image of him."

When at length the good man was made thoroughly aware of the fact that his son and heir boasted a name so memorable in history as that borne by the enslaver of Athens, and the disputed arranger of Homer, and it was asserted to be a name that he himself had suggested, he was as angry as so mild a man could be. "But it is infamous!" he exclaimed. "Pisistratus christened! Pisistratus! who lived six hundred years before Christ was born. Good heavens, madam! You have made me the father of an anachronism."

My mother burst into tears. But the evil was irremediable. An anachronism I was, and an anachronism I must continue to the end of the chapter.

The Caxtons (1849), Pt. i., Ch. iii

JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT

83. *A Reminiscence of Shelley*

I WAS returning home one night to Hampstead after the opera. As I approached the door, I heard strange and alarming shrieks, mixed with the voice of a man. The next day, it was reported by the gossips that Mr. Shelley, no Christian (for it was he who was there), had brought some "very strange female" into the house, no better, of course, than she ought to be. The real Christian had puzzled them. Shelley, in coming to our house that night, had found a woman lying near the top of the hill, in fits. It was a fierce winter night, with snow upon the ground; and winter loses nothing of its fierceness at Hampstead. My friend, always the promptest as well as the most pitying on these occasions, knocked at the first houses he could reach, in order to have the woman taken in. The invariable answer was, that they could not do it. He asked for an outhouse to put her in, while he went for a doctor. Impossible! In vain he assured them she was no impostor.

They would not dispute the point with him; but doors were closed, and windows were shut down. Had he lit upon worthy Mr. Park, the philologist, he would assuredly have come, in spite of his Calvinism. But he lived too far off. Had he lit upon my friend, Armitage Brown, who lived on another side of the heath; or on his friend and neighbour, Dilke; they would, either of them, have jumped up from amidst their books or their bed-clothes, and have gone out with him. But the paucity of Christians is astonishing, considering the number of them. Time flies; the poor woman is in convulsions; her son, a young man, lamenting over her. At last my friend sees a carriage driving up to a house at a little distance. The knock is given; the warm door opens; servants and lights pour forth. Now, thought he, is the time. He puts on his best address, which anybody might recognise for that of the highest gentleman as well as of an interesting individual, and plants himself in the way of an elderly person, who is stepping out of the carriage with his family. He tells his story. They only press on the faster. "Will you go and see her?" "No, sir; there's

no necessity for that sort of thing, depend on it. Impostors swarm everywhere: the thing cannot be done; sir, your conduct is extraordinary." "Sir," cried Shelley, assuming a very different manner, and forcing the flourishing householder to stop out of astonishment, "I am sorry to say that *your* conduct is *not* extraordinary; and if my own seems to amaze you, I will tell you something which may amaze you a little more, and I hope will frighten you. It is such men as you who madden the spirits and patience of the poor and wretched; and if ever a convulsion comes in this country (which is very probable), recollect what I tell you:—you will have your house, that you refuse to put the miserable woman into, burnt over your head." "God bless me, sir! Dear me, sir!" exclaimed the poor frightened man, and fluttered into his mansion. The woman was then brought to our house, which was at some distance, and down a bleak path; and Shelley and her son were obliged to hold her till the doctor could arrive. It appeared that she had been attending this son in London, on a criminal charge made against him, the agitation of which had thrown her into the fits

on her return. The doctor said that she would have perished, had she lain there a short time longer. The next day my friend sent mother and son comfortably home to Hendon, where they were known, and whence they returned him thanks full of gratitude.

Autobiography (1850), Ch. xv

GEORGE BORROW

84. *A Gipsy on Life and Death*

"WHAT is your opinion of death, Mr. Petulengro?" said I, as I sat down beside him.

"My opinion of death, brother, is much the same as that in the old song of Pharaoh, which I have heard my grandam sing:—

'Cana marel o manus chivios andé puv,
Ta rovel pa leste o chavo ta romi.'

When a man dies, he is cast into the earth, and his wife and child sorrow over him. If he has neither wife nor child, then his father and mother, I suppose; and if he is quite alone in the world, why, then, he is cast into the earth, and there is an end of the matter."

"And do you think that is the end of a man?"

"There's an end of him, brother, more's the pity."

"Why do you say so?"

"Life is sweet, brother."

"Do you think so?"

"Think so! There's night and day, brother, both sweet things; sun, moon and stars, brother, all sweet things; there's likewise a wind on the heath. Life is very sweet, brother; who would wish to die?"

"I would wish to die——"

"You talk like a gorgio—which is the same as talking like a fool—were you a Romany Chal you would talk wiser. Wish to die, indeed! A Romany Chal would wish to live for ever!"

"In sickness, Jasper?"

"There's the sun and stars, brother."

"In blindness, Jasper!"

"There's the wind on the heath, brother; if I could only feel that, I would gladly live for ever. Dosta, we'll now go to the tents and put on the gloves; and I'll try to make you feel what a sweet thing it is to be alive, brother!"

Lavengro (1851), Vol. i., Ch. xxv

85. *Æsop and Rhodope*

Rhodope. But, Æsop, you should never say the thing that is untrue.

Æsop. We say and do and look no other all our lives.

Rhodope. Do we never know better?

Æsop. Yes; when we cease to please, and to wish it; when death is settling the features, and the cerements are ready to render them unchangeable.

Rhodope. Alas! alas!

Æsop. Breathe, Rhodope, breathe again those painless sighs: they belong to thy vernal season. May thy summer of life be calm, thy autumn calmer, and thy winter never come.

Rhodope. I must die then earlier.

Æsop. Laodameia died; Helen died; Leda, the beloved of Jupiter, went before. It is better to repose in the earth betimes than to sit up late; better, than to cling pertinaciously to what we feel crumbling under us, and to protract an inevitable fall. We may enjoy the present while

we are insensible of infirmity and decay; but the present, like a note in music, is nothing but as it appertains to what is past and what is to come. There are no fields of amaranth on this side of the grave: there are no voices, O Rhodope! that are not soon mute, however tuneful: there is no name, with whatever emphasis of passionate love repeated, of which the echo is not faint at last.

Imaginary Conversations of Greeks and Romans (1853)

MRS. GASKELL

86. *Captain Brown*

"ELEGANT economy!" How naturally one falls back into the phraseology of Cranford! There, economy was always "elegant," and money-spending always "vulgar and ostentatious;" a sort of sour grapeism which made us very peaceful and satisfied. I never shall forget the dismay felt when a certain Captain Brown came to live at Cranford, and openly spoke about his being poor—not in a whisper to an intimate friend, the doors and windows being previously closed,

but in the public street! in a loud military voice! alleging his poverty as a reason for not taking a particular house. The ladies of Cranford were already rather moaning over the invasion of their territories by a man and a gentleman. He was a half-pay captain, and had obtained some situation on a neighbouring railroad, which had been vehemently petitioned against by the little town; and if, in addition to his masculine gender, and his connection with the obnoxious railroad, he was so brazen as to talk of being poor—why, then, indeed, he must be sent to Coventry. Death was as true and as common as poverty; yet people never spoke about that loud out in the streets. It was a word not to be mentioned to ears polite. We had tacitly agreed to ignore that any with whom we associated on terms of visiting equality could ever be prevented by poverty from doing anything that they wished. If we walked to or from a party, it was because the night was *so* fine, or the air *so* refreshing; not because sedan chairs were expensive. If we wore prints instead of summer silks, it was because we preferred a washing material; and so on, till we blinded ourselves to

the vulgar fact that we were, all of us, people of very moderate means. Of course, then, we did not know what to make of a man who could speak of poverty as if it was not a disgrace. Yet, somehow, Captain Brown made himself respected in Cranford, and was called upon, in spite of all resolutions to the contrary. I was surprised to hear his opinions quoted as authority at a visit which I paid to Cranford about a year after he had settled in the town. My own friends had been among the bitterest opponents of any proposal to visit the Captain and his daughters, only twelve months before; and now he was even admitted in the tabooed hours before twelve. True, it was to discover the cause of a smoking chimney, before the fire was lighted; but still Captain Brown walked upstairs, nothing daunted, spoke in a voice too large for the room, and joked quite in the way of a tame man about the house. He had been blind to all the small slights, and omissions of trivial ceremonies, with which he had been received. He had been friendly, though the Cranford ladies had been cool: he had answered small sarcastic compliments in good faith; and with his manly frankness had

overpowered all the shrinking which met him as a man who was not ashamed to be poor. And, at last, his excellent masculine common sense, and his facility in devising expedients to overcome domestic dilemmas, had gained him an extraordinary place as authority among the Cranford ladies. He himself went on in his course, as unaware of his popularity as he had been of the reverse.

Cranford (1853), Ch. i

CHARLES KINGSLEY

87. *Amyas Leigh's Dream*

"WHEN you left me there upon the rock, lads, I looked away and out to sea, to get one last snuff of the merry sea breeze, which will never sail me again. And as I looked, I tell you truth, I could see the water and the sky; as plain as ever I saw them, till I thought my sight was come again. But soon I knew it was not so; for I saw more than man could see; right over the ocean, as I live, and away to the Spanish Main. And I saw Barbados, and Grenada, and all the

isles that we ever sailed by; and La Guayra in Carraccas, and the Silla, and the house beneath it where she lived. And I saw him walking with her on the barbecu, and he loved her then. I saw what I saw; and he loved her; and I say he loves her still.

"Then I saw the cliffs beneath me, and the Gull-rock, and the Shutter, and the Ledge; I saw them, William Cary, and the weeds beneath the merry blue sea. And I saw the grand old galleon, Will; she has righted with the sweeping of the tide. She lies in fifteen fathoms, at the edge of the rocks, upon the sand; and her men are all lying round her, asleep until the judgment-day."

Cary and Jack looked at him, and then at each other. His eyes were clear, and bright, and full of meaning; and yet they knew that he was blind. His voice was shaping itself into a song. Was he inspired? Insane? What was it? And they listened with awe-struck faces, as the giant pointed down into the blue depths far below, and went on.

"And I saw him sitting in his cabin, like a valiant gentleman of Spain; and his officers were

sitting round him, with their swords upon the table at the wine. And the prawns and the crayfish and the rockling, they swam in and out above their heads: but Don Guzman he never heeded, but sat still, and drank his wine. Then he took a locket from his bosom; and I heard him speak, Will, and he said: 'Here's the picture of my fair and true lady; drink to her, Señors all.' Then he spoke to me, Will, and called me, right up through the oarweed and the sea: 'We have had a fair quarrel, Señor; it is time to be friends once more. My wife and your brother have forgiven me; so your honour takes no stain.' And I answered, 'We are friends, Don Guzman; God has judged our quarrel, and not we.' Then he said, 'I sinned, and I am punished.' And I said, 'And, Señor, so am I.' Then he held out his hand to me, Cary; and I stooped to take it, and awoke."

Westward Ho! (1855), Vol. iii., Ch. xii.

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE

88. *England in Olden Days*

THE habits of all classes were open, free, and liberal. There are two expressions corresponding one to the other, which we frequently meet with in old writings, and which are used as a kind of index, marking whether the condition of things was or was not what it ought to be. We read of "merry England;"—when England was not merry, things were not going well with it. We hear of "the glory of hospitality," England's pre-eminent boast,—by the rules of which all tables, from the table of the twenty-shilling freeholder to the table in the baron's hall and abbey refectory, were open at the dinner hour to all comers, without stint or reserve, or question asked: to every man, according to his degree, who chose to ask for it, there was free fare and free lodging; bread, beef, and beer for his dinner; for his lodging, perhaps, only a mat of rushes in a spare corner of the hall, with a billet of wood for a pillow, but freely offered and freely taken, the guest probably faring much

as his host fared, neither worse nor better. There was little fear of an abuse of such licence, for suspicious characters had no leave to wander at pleasure; and for any man found at large, and unable to give a sufficient account of himself, there were the ever-ready parish stocks or town gaol. The "glory of hospitality" lasted far down into Elizabeth's time; and then, as Camden says, 'came in great bravery of building, to the marvellous beautifying of the realm, but to the decay" of what he valued more.

In such frank style the people lived, hating three things with all their hearts: idleness, want, and cowardice; and for the rest, carrying their hearts high, and having their heads full. The hour of rising, winter and summer, was four o'clock, with breakfast at five, after which the labourers went to work and the gentlemen to business, of which they had no little. In the country every unknown face was challenged and examined—if the account given was insufficient, he was brought before the justice; if the village shopkeeper sold bad wares, if the village cobbler made "unhonest" shoes, if servants and masters quarrelled, all was to be looked to by the justice;

there was no fear lest time should hang heavy with him. At twelve he dined; after dinner he went hunting, or to his farm, or to what he pleased. It was a life unrefined, perhaps, but coloured with a broad, rosy, English health.

History of England (1856), Vol. i., Ch. i

CHARLES DARWIN

89. *Conclusion*

Authors of the highest eminence seem to be fully satisfied with the view that each species has been independently created. To my mind it accords better with what we know of the laws impressed on matter by the Creator, that the production and extinction of the past and present inhabitants of the world should have been due to secondary causes, like those determining the birth and death of the individual. When I view all beings not as special creations, but as the lineal descendants of some few beings which lived long before the first bed of the Silurian system was deposited, they seem to me to become ennobled. Judging from the past, we may safely

infer that not one living species will transmit its unalterable likeness to a distant futurity. And of the species now living very few will transmit progeny of any kind to a far distant futurity; for the manner in which all organic beings are grouped, shows that the greater number of species of each genus, and all the species of many genera, have left no descendants, but have become utterly extinct. We can so far take a prophetic glance into futurity as to foretell that it will be the common and widely-spread species, belonging to the larger and dominant groups, which will ultimately prevail and procreate new and dominant species. As all the living forms of life are the lineal descendants of those which lived long before the Silurian epoch, we may feel certain that the ordinary succession by generation has never once been broken, and that no cataclysm has desolated the whole world. Hence we may look with some confidence to a secure future of equally inappreciable length. And as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection.

It is interesting to contemplate a tangled bank,

clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent upon each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us. These laws, taken in the largest sense, being Growth with Reproduction; Inheritance which is almost implied by reproduction; Variability from the indirect and direct action of the external conditions of life, and from use and disuse: a Ratio of Increase so high as to lead to a Struggle for life, and as a consequence to Natural Selection, entailing Divergence of Character and the Extinction of less-improved forms. Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a be-

ginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being evolved.

The Origin of Species (1859), Ch. xiv

JOHN BROWN

90. *A Reminiscence of an Uncle*

Uncle Ebenezer, on the other hand, flowed *per saltum;* he was always good and saintly, but he was great once a week; six days he brooded over his message, was silent, withdrawn, self-involved; on the Sabbath, that downcast, almost timid man, who shunned men, the instant he was in the pulpit, stood up a son of thunder. Such a voice! such a piercing eye! such an inevitable forefinger, held out trembling with the terrors of the Lord; such a power of asking questions and letting them fall deep into the hearts of his hearers, and then answering them himself, with an "ah, sirs!" that thrilled and quivered from him to them.

I remember his astonishing us all with a sudden burst. It was a sermon upon the apparent *plus* of evil in this world, and he had driven him-

self and us all to despair—so much sin, so much misery—when, taking advantage of the chapter he had read, the account of the uproar at Ephesus in the Theatre, he said, "Ah, sirs! what if some of the men who, for 'about the space of two hours,' cried out, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians,' have for the space of eighteen hundred years and more been crying day and night, 'Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are all thy ways, thou King of saints; who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy.'"

You have doubtless heard of the story of Lord Brougham going to hear him. It is very characteristic, and as I had it from Mrs. Cuninghame, who was present, I may be allowed to tell it. Brougham and Denman were on a visit to James Stuart of Dunearn, about the time of the Queen's trial. They had asked Stuart where they should go to church; he said he would take them to a Seceder minister at Inverkeithing. They went, and as Mr. Stuart had described the saintly old man, Brougham said he would like to be introduced to him, and arriving before service time, Mr. Stuart called, and left a message that some

gentlemen wished to see him. The answer was that "Maister" Brown saw nobody before divine worship. He then sent in Brougham and Denman's names. "Mr. Brown's compliments to Mr. Stuart, and he sees nobody before sermon," and in a few minutes out came the stooping shy old man, and passed them, unconscious of their presence. They sat in the front gallery, and he preached a faithful sermon, full of fire and of native force. They came away greatly moved, and each wrote to Lord Jeffrey to lose not a week in coming to hear the greatest natural orator they had ever heard. Jeffrey came next Sunday, and often after declared he never heard such words, such a sacred, untaught gift of speech.

Letter to John Cairns, D. D. (1860)

"GEORGE ELIOT"

91. *Godfrey Cass unburdens his Mind*

"EVERYTHING comes to light, Nancy, sooner or later. When God Almighty wills it, our secrets are found out. I've lived with a secret on my

mind, but I'll keep it from you no longer. I wouldn't have you know it by somebody else, and not by me—I wouldn't have you find it out after I'm dead. I'll tell you now. It's been 'I will' and 'I won't' with me all my life—I'll make sure of myself now."

Nancy's utmost dread had returned. The eyes of the husband and wife met with awe in them, as at a crisis which suspended affection.

"Nancy," said Godfrey, slowly, "when I married you, I hid something from you—something I ought to have told you. That woman Marner found dead in the snow—Eppie's mother—that wretched woman—was my wife. Eppie is my child."

He paused, dreading the effect of his confession. But Nancy sat quite still, only that her eyes dropped and ceased to meet his. She was pale and quiet as a meditative statue, clasping her hands on her lap.

"You'll never think the same of me again," said Godfrey, after a little while, with some tremor in his voice.

She was silent.

"I oughtn't to have left the child unowned:

I oughtn't to have kept it from you. But I couldn't bear to give you up, Nancy. I was led away into marrying her—I suffered for it."

Still Nancy was silent, looking down; and he almost expected that she would presently get up and say she would go to her father's. How could she have any mercy for faults that must seem so black to her, with her simple severe notions?

But at last she lifted up her eyes to his again and spoke. There was no indignation in her voice—only deep regret.

"Godfrey, if you had but told me this six years ago, we could have done some of our duty by the child. Do you think I'd have refused to take her in, if I'd known she was yours?"

At that moment Godfrey felt all the bitterness of an error that was not simply futile, but had defeated its own end. He had not measured this wife with whom he had lived so long. But she spoke again, with more agitation.

"And—O, Godfrey—if we'd had her from the first, if you'd taken to her as you ought, she'd have loved me for her mother—and you'd have been happier with me: I could better have bore

my little baby dying, and our life might have been more like what we used to think it 'ud be."

The tears fell, and Nancy ceased to speak.

"But you wouldn't have married me then, Nancy, if I'd told you," said Godfrey, urged, in the bitterness of his self-reproach, to prove to himself that his conduct had not been utter folly. "You may think you would now, but you wouldn't then. With your pride and your father's, you'd have hated having anything to do with me after the talk there'd have been."

"I can't say what I should have done about that, Godfrey. I should never have married anybody else. But I wasn't worth doing wrong for —nothing is in this world. Nothing is so good as it seems beforehand—not even our marrying wasn't, you see." There was a faint sad smile on Nancy's face as she said the last words.

"I'm a worse man than you thought I was, Nancy," said Godfrey, rather tremulously. "Can you forgive me ever?"

"The wrong to me is but little, Godfrey: you've made it up to me—you've been good to me for fifteen years. It's another you did the

wrong to; and I doubt it can never be all made up for."

"But we can take Eppie now," said Godfrey. "I won't mind the world knowing at last. I'll be plain and open for the rest o' my life."

"It'll be different coming to us, now she's grown up," said Nancy, shaking her head sadly. "But it's your duty to acknowledge her and provide for her; and I'll do my part by her, and pray to God Almighty to make her love me."

"Then we'll go together to Silas Marner's this very night, as soon as everything's quiet at the Stone-pits."

Silas Marner (1861), Ch. xviii

CHARLES READE

92. *A Scrupulous Conscience*

IMPETUOUS natures repent quickly. Gerard was no sooner out of all danger than his conscience began to prick him.

"Martin, would I had not struck quite so hard."

"Whom? Oh! let that pass; he is cheap served."

"Martin, I saw his grey hairs as my stick fell on him. I doubt they will not from my sight this while."

Martin grunted with contempt. "Who spares a badger for his grey hairs? The greyer your enemy is, the older; and the older the craftier; and the craftier the better for a little killing."

"Killing? killing, Martin? Speak not of killing!" and Gerard shook all over.

"I am much mistook if you have not," said Martin cheerfully.

"Now Heaven forbid!"

"The old vagabond's skull cracked like a walnut, aha!"

"Heaven and the saints forbid it!"

"He rolled off his mule like a stone shot out of a cart. Said I to myself, 'There is one wiped out,'" and the iron old soldier grinned ruthlessly.

Gerard fell on his knees and began to pray for his enemy's life.

At this Martin lost his patience. "Here's mummery. What! you that set up for learning, know you not that a wise man never strikes his

enemy but to kill him? And what is all this coil about killing of old men? If it had been a young one, now, with the joys of life waiting for him, wine, women, and pillage! But an old fellow at the edge of the grave, why *not* shove him in? Go he must, to-day or to-morrow; and what better place for grey-beards? Now, if ever I should be so mischancy as to last so long as Ghysbrecht did, and have to go on a mule's legs instead of Martin Wittenhaagen's, and a back like this (striking the wood of his bow), instead of this (striking the string), I'll thank and bless any young fellow who will knock me on the head, as you have done that old shopkeeper; malison on his memory."

"Oh, culpa mea! culpa mea!" cried Gerard, and smote upon his breast.

"Look there!" said Martin to Margaret scornfully, "*he is a priest at heart still;* and when he is not in ire, St. Paul, what a milksop!"

"Tush, Martin!" cried Margaret reproachfully: then she wreathed her arms round Gerard, and comforted him with the double magic of a woman's sense and a woman's voice.

"Sweetheart," murmured she, "you forget:

you went not a step out of the way to harm him, who hunted you to your death. You fled from him. He it was who spurred on you. Then did you strike; but in self-defence and a single blow, and with that which was in your hand. Malice had drawn knife, or struck again and again. How often have men been smitten with staves not one but many blows, yet no lives lost! If then your enemy has fallen, it is through his own malice, not yours, and by the will of God."

"Bless you, Margaret; bless you for thinking so!"

The Cloister and the Hearth (1861), Ch. xix

JOHN STUART MILL

93. *Character of his Wife*

In general spiritual characteristics, as well as in temperament and organization, I have often compared her, as she was at this time, to Shelley: but in thought and intellect, Shelley, so far as his powers were developed in his short life, was but a child compared with what she ultimately became. Alike in the highest regions of specula-

tion and in the smaller practical concerns of daily life, her mind was the same perfect instrument, piercing to the very heart and marrow of the matter; always seizing the essential idea or principle. The same exactness and rapidity of operation, pervading as it did her sensitive as well as her mental faculties, would, with her gifts of feeling and imagination, have fitted her to be a consummate artist, as her fiery and tender soul and her vigorous eloquence would certainly have made her a great orator, and her profound knowledge of human nature and discernment and sagacity in practical life, would, in the times when such a *carrière* was open to women, have made her eminent among the rulers of mankind. Her intellectual gifts did but minister to a moral character at once the noblest and the best balanced which I have ever met with in life. Her unselfishness was not that of a taught system of duties, but of a heart which thoroughly identified itself with the feelings of others, and often went to excess in consideration for them by imaginatively investing their feelings with the intensity of its own. The passion of justice might have been thought to be her strongest feelings,

but for her boundless generosity, and a lovingness ever ready to pour itself forth upon any or all human beings who were capable of giving the smallest feeling in return. The rest of her moral characteristics were such as naturally accompany these qualities of mind and heart: the most genuine modesty combined with the loftiest pride; a simplicity and sincerity which were absolute, towards all who were fit to receive them; the utmost scorn of whatever was mean and cowardly, and a burning indignation at everything brutal or tyrannical, faithless or dishonourable in conduct and character, while making the broadest distinction between *mala in se* and mere *mala prohibita*—between acts giving evidence of intrinsic badness in feeling and character, and those which are only violations of conventions either good or bad, violations which whether in themselves right or wrong, are capable of being committed by persons in every other respect lovable or admirable.

Autobiography (*c.* 1861)

94. *"Our Daily Bread"*

Ah! how wonderful ways and means are! When I think how this very line, this very word, which I am writing represents money, I am lost in a respectful astonishment. A man takes his own case, as he says his own prayers, on behalf of himself and his family. I am paid, we will say, for the sake of illustration, at the rate of sixpence per line. With the words, "Ah, how wonderful," to the words "per line," I can buy a loaf, a piece of butter, a jug of milk, a modicum of tea,—actually enough to make breakfast for the family; and the servants of the house; and the charwoman, *their* servant, can shake up the tea-leaves with a fresh supply of water, sop the crusts, and get a meal *tant bien que mal.* Wife, children, guests, servants, charwoman, we are all actually making a meal off Philip Firmin's bones as it were. And my next-door neighbour, whom I see marching away to chambers, umbrella in hand? And next door but one the City man? And next door but two the doctor?—I know the

baker has left loaves at every one of their doors this morning, that all their chimneys are smoking, and they will all have breakfast. Ah, thank God for it! I hope, friend, you and I are not too proud to ask for our daily bread, and to be grateful for getting it? Mr. Philip had to work for his, in care and trouble, like other children of men:—to work for it, and I hope to pray for it, too. It is a thought to me awful and beautiful, that of the daily prayer, and of the myriads of fellow-men uttering it, in care and in sickness, in doubt and in poverty, in health and in wealth. *Panem nostrum da nobis hodie.* Philip whispers it by the bedside where wife and child lie sleeping, and goes to his early labour with a stouter heart: as he creeps to his rest when the day's labour is over, and the quotidian bread is earned, and breathes his hushed thanks to the bountiful Giver of the meal. All over this world what an endless chorus is singing of love, and thanks, and prayer. Day tells to day the wondrous story, and night recounts it unto night.—How do I come to think of a sunrise which I saw near twenty years ago on the Nile, when the river and sky flushed and glowed with the dawning light,

and as the luminary appeared, the boatman knelt on the rosy deck, and adored Allah? So, as thy sun rises, friend, over the humble housetops round about your home, shall you wake many and many a day to duty and labour. May the task have been honestly done when the night comes; and the steward deal kindly with the labourer.

The Adventures of Philip (1862), Ch. xxxv

CARDINAL NEWMAN

95. *Newman at Fifteen*

When I was fifteen, (in the autumn of 1816,) a great change of thought took place in me. I fell under the influences of a definite Creed, and received into my intellect impressions of dogma, which, through God's mercy, have never been effaced or obscured. Above and beyond the conversations and sermons of the excellent man, long dead, who was the human means of this beginning of divine faith in me, was the effect of the books which he put into my hands, all of

the school of Calvin. One of the first books I read was a work of Romaine's; I neither recollect the title nor the contents, except one doctrine, which of course I do not include among those which I believe to have come from a divine source, viz. the doctrine of final perseverance. I received it at once, and believed that the inward conversion of which I was conscious, (and of which I still am more certain than that I have hands and feet,) would last into the next life, and that I was elected to eternal glory. I have no consciousness that this belief had any tendency whatever to lead me to be careless about pleasing God. I retained it till the age of twenty-one, when it gradually faded away; but I believe that it had some influence on my opinions, in the direction of those childish imaginations which I have already mentioned, viz. in isolating me from the objects which surrounded me, in confirming me in my mistrust of the reality of material phenomena, and making me rest in the thought of two and two only supreme and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator;—for while I considered myself predestined to salvation, I thought others simply passed over,

not predestined to eternal death. I only thought of the mercy to myself.

Apologia pro Vita sua (1864), Ch. iii

MATTHEW ARNOLD

96. *Rallying the Philistine*

At that time my avocations led me to travel almost daily on one of the Great Eastern lines,—the Woodford Branch. Every one knows that Müller perpetrated his detestable act on the North London Railway, close by. The English middle class, of which I am myself a feeble unit, travel on the Woodford Branch in large numbers. Well, the demoralisation of our class,—which (the newspapers are constantly saying it, so I may repeat it without vanity) has done all the great things which have ever been done in England,—the demoralisation, I say, of our class, caused by the Bow tragedy, was something bewildering. Myself a transcendentalist (as the *Saturday Review* knows), I escaped the infection; and, day after day, I used to ply my agitated fellow-travellers with all the consolations which

my transcendentalism, and my turn for the French, would naturally suggest to me. I reminded them how Cæsar refused to take precautions against assassination, because life was not worth having at the price of an ignoble solicitude for it. I reminded them what insignificant atoms we all are in the life of the world. "Suppose the worst to happen," I said, addressing a portly jeweller from Cheapside; "suppose even yourself to be the victim; *il n'y a pas d'homme nécessaire.* We should miss you for a day or two upon the Woodford Branch; but the great mundane movement would still go on; the gravel walks of your villa would still be rolled; dividends would still be paid at the Bank; omnibuses would still run; there would still be the old crush at the corner of Fenchurch Street." All was of no avail. Nothing could moderate, in the bosom of the great English middle class, their passionate, absorbing, almost blood-thirsty clinging to life.

Essays in Criticism (1865), Preface

97. *To Fanny Kemble*

I—WE—have finished all Sir Walter's Scotch Novels; and I thought I would try an English one: Kenilworth—a wonderful Drama, which Theatre, Opera, and Ballet (as I once saw it represented) may well reproduce. The Scene at Greenwich, where Elizabeth "interviews" Sussex and Leicester, seemed to me as fine as what is called (I am told, wrongly) Shakespeare's Henry VIII. Of course, plenty of melodrama in most other parts:—but the Plot wonderful.

Then—after Sir Walter—Dickens' Copperfield, which came to an end last night because I would not let my Reader read the last chapter. What a touch when Peggotty—the man—at last finds the lost Girl, and—throws a handkerchief over her face when he takes her to his arms—never to leave her! I maintain it—a little Shakespeare—a Cockney Shakespeare, if you will: but as distinct, if not so great, a piece of pure Genius as was born in Stratford. Oh, I am quite sure of that, had I to choose but one of them, I would

choose Dickens' hundred delightful Caricatures rather than Thackeray's half-dozen terrible Photographs.

Letters (1879)

GEORGE MEREDITH

98. *Banter before Dinner*

"But tell Dr. Middleton," said she, "I fear I shall have no one worthy of him! And," she added to Willoughby, as she walked out to her carriage, "I shall expect you to do the great-gunnery talk at table."

"Miss Dale keeps it up with him best," said Willoughby.

"She does everything best! But my dinner-table is involved, and I cannot count on a young woman to talk across it. I would hire a lion of a menagerie, if one were handy, rather than have a famous scholar at my table unsupported by another famous scholar. Dr. Middleton would ride down a duke when the wine is in him. He will terrify my poor flock. The truth is, we can't

leaven him: I foresee undigested lumps of conversation, unless you devote yourself."

"I will devote myself," said Willoughby.

"I can calculate on Colonel De Craye and our porcelain beauty for any quantity of sparkles, if you promise that. They play well together. You are not to be one of the Gods to-night, but a kind of Jupiter's cupbearer;—Juno's, if you like: and Lady Busshe and Lady Culmer, and all your admirers shall know subsequently what you have done. You see my alarm. I certainly did not rank Professor Crooklyn among the possibly faithless, or I never would have ventured on Dr. Middleton at my table. My dinner-parties have hitherto been all successes. Naturally I feel the greater anxiety about this one. For a single failure is all the more conspicuous. The exception is everlastingly cited! It is not so much what people say, but my own sentiments. I hate to fail. However, if you are true we may do."

"Whenever the great gun goes off I will fall on my face, madam!"

The Egoist (1879), Ch. xxix

99. *The Death of Marius*

For there remained also, for the old earthy creature still within him, that great blessedness of physical slumber. To sleep, to lose oneself in sleep—that, as he had recognised always, was a good thing. And it was after a space of deep sleep that he awoke amid the murmuring voices of the people who had kept and tended him so carefully through his sickness, now kneeling around his bed: and what he heard confirmed, in his, then perfect, clearness of soul, the spontaneous suggestion of his own bodily feeling. He had often dreamt that he had been condemned to die, that the hour, with wild thoughts of escape, had arrived; and waking, with the sun all around him, in complete liberty of life, had been full of gratitude, for his place there, alive still, in the land of the living. He read, surely, now, in the manner, the doings, of these people, some of whom were passing away through the doorway, where the sun still lay heavy and full, that his last morning was come, and turned to think

again of the beloved. Of old, he had often fancied that not to die on a dark and rainy day would itself have a little alleviating grace or favour about it. The people around his bed were praying fervently—*Abi! Abi! anima Christiana!* In the moments of his extreme helplessness their mystic bread had been placed, had descended like a snow-flake from the sky, between his lips. Soothing fingers had applied to hands and feet, to all those old passage-ways of the senses, through which the world had come and gone from him, now so dark and obstructed, a medicinable oil. It was the same people, who, in the grey, austere evening of that day, took up his remains, and buried them secretly, with their accustomed prayers; but with joy also, holding his death, according to their generous view in this matter, to have been of the nature of a martyrdom; and martyrdom, as the church had always said, a kind of sacrament with plenary grace.

Marcus the Epicurean (1885), Ch. xxviii

100. *An Eventful Sabbath Morning*

On this particular Sunday, there was no doubt but that the spring had come at last. It was warm, with a latent shiver in the air that made the warmth only the more welcome. The shallows of the stream glittered and tinkled among bunches of primrose. Vagrant scents of the earth arrested Archie by the way with moments of ethereal intoxication. The grey, Quakerish dale was still only awakened in places and patches from the sobriety of its winter colouring; and he wondered at its beauty; an essential beauty of the old earth it seemed to him, not resident in particulars but breathing to him from the whole. He surprised himself by a sudden impulse to write poetry—he did so sometimes, loose, galloping octosyllabics in the vein of Scott—and when he had taken his place on a boulder, near some fairy falls and shaded by a whip of a tree that was already radiant with new leaves, it still more surprised him that he should find nothing to write. His heart perhaps beat in time to

some vast indwelling rhyme of the universe. By the time he came to a corner of the valley and could see the kirk, he had so lingered by the way that the first psalm was finishing. The nasal psalmody, full of turns and trills and graceless graces, seemed the essential voice of the kirk itself upraised in thanksgiving. "Everything's alive," he said; and again cries it aloud "thank God, everything's alive!" He lingered yet awhile in the kirk-yard. A tuft of primroses was blooming hard by the leg of an old, black table tombstone, and he stopped to contemplate the random apologue. They stood forth on the cold earth with a trenchancy of contrast; and he was struck with a sense of incompleteness in the day, the season, and the beauty that surrounded him—the chill there was in the warmth, the gross black clods about the opening primroses, the damp earthy smell that was everywhere intermingled with the scents. The voice of the aged Torrance within rose in an ecstasy. And he wondered if Torrance also felt in his old bones the joyous influence of the spring morning; Torrance, or the shadow of what once was Torrance, that must come so soon to lie outside here in the

sun and rain with all his rheumatisms, while a new minister stood in his room and thundered from his own familiar pulpit? The pity of it, and something of the chill of the grave, shook him for a moment as he made haste to enter.

Weir of Hermiston (1896), Ch. vi